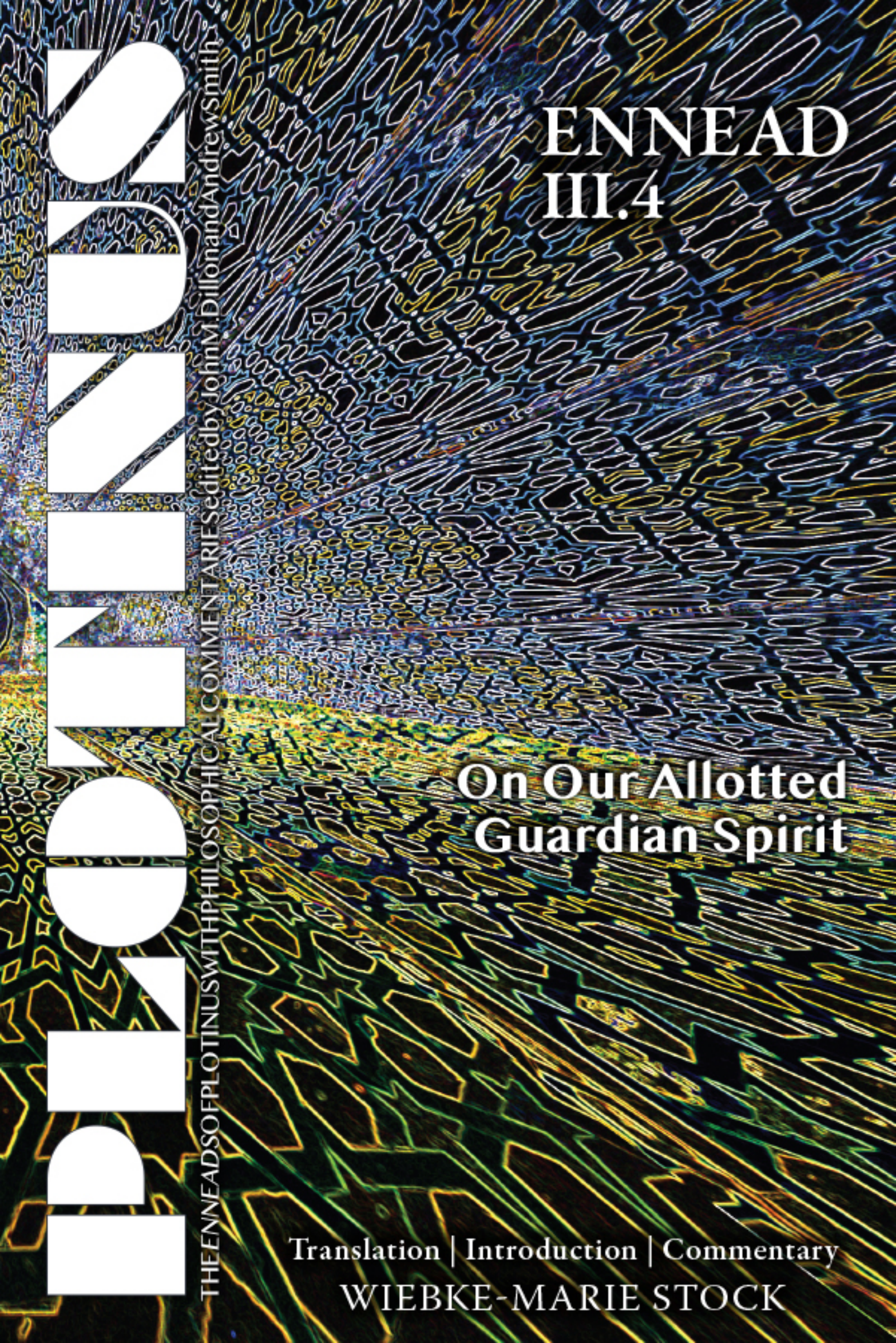
PLOTINUS
THE ENNEADS OF PLOTINUS WITH PHILOSOPHICAL COMMENTARIES Edited by John M Dillon and Andrew Smith
ENNEAD
III.4
On Our Allotted
Guardian Spirit
Translation | Introduction | Commentary
WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK

PLOTINUS
ENNEAD III.4

THE *ENNEADS* OF PLOTINUS

With Philosophical Commentaries

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PLOTINUS
ENNEAD III.4

On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit

Translation with an Introduction and Commentary

WIEBKE-MARIE STOCK

PARMENIDES
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This edition published in 2020 by Parmenides Publishing
in the United States of America

ISBN soft cover: 978-1-7335357-0-0
ISBN e-Book: 978-1-7335357-1-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Plotinus, author. | Stock, Wiebke-Marie, translator, writer of added commentary.
Title: Ennead, III.4, On our allotted guardian spirit / Plotinus ; translation, introduction, commentary by Wiebke-Marie Stock.
Other titles: Enneads. III, 4. English | On our allotted guardian spirit | Plotinus, Ennead III.4
Description: Las Vegas : Parmenides Publishing, 2020. | Series: The Enneads of Plotinus : with philosophical commentaries | Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019000721 (print) | LCCN 2019003442 (ebook) | ISBN 9781733535717 (E-book) | ISBN 9781733535700 (pbk. : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Neoplatonism--Early works to 1800. | Genius (Companion spirit)--Early works to 1800. | Plotinus. Enneads. III, 4.
Classification: LCC B693.E52 (ebook) | LCC B693.E52 E5 2020 (print) | DDC 186/.4--dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019000721

Typeset in Warnock and Futura by Parmenides Publishing
Printed digitally by Integrated Books International (IBI), Chicago, IL

www.parmenides.com

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Introduction to the Series With a Brief Outline of the Life and Thought of Plotinus (205–270 CE)

Plotinus was born in 205 CE in Egypt of Greek-speaking parents. He attended the philosophical schools in Alexandria where he would have studied Plato (427–347 BCE), Aristotle (384–322 BCE), the Stoics and Epicureans as well as other Greek philosophical traditions. He began his serious philosophical education, however, relatively late in life, at the age of twenty-seven and was deeply impressed by the Platonist Ammonius Saccas about whom we, unfortunately, know very little, but with whom Plotinus studied for some eleven years. Even our knowledge of Plotinus' life is limited to what we can glean from Porphyry's introduction to his edition of his philosophical treatises, an account colored by Porphyry's own concerns. After completing his studies in Alexandria Plotinus attempted, by joining a military expedition of the Roman emperor Gordian III, to make contact with the

Brahmins in order to learn something of Indian thought. Unfortunately Gordian was defeated and killed (244). Plotinus somehow managed to extract himself and we next hear of him in Rome where he was able to set up a school of philosophy in the house of a high-ranking Roman lady by the name of Gemina. It is, perhaps, surprising that he had no formal contacts with the Platonic Academy in Athens, which was headed at the time by Longinus, but Longinus was familiar with his work, partly at least through Porphyry who had studied in Athens. The fact that it was Rome where Plotinus set up his school may be due to the originality of his philosophical activity and to his patrons. He clearly had some influential contacts, not least with the philhellenic emperor Gallienus (253–268), who may also have encouraged his later failed attempt to set up a civic community based on Platonic principles in a ruined city in Campania.

Plotinus' school was, like most ancient schools of philosophy, relatively small in scale, but did attract distinguished students from abroad and from the Roman upper classes. It included not only philosophers but also politicians and members of the medical profession who wished to lead the philosophical life. His most famous student was Porphyry (233–305) who, as a relative latecomer to the school, persuaded him to put into writing the results of his seminars. It is almost certain that we possess most, if not all, of his written output, which represents

his mature thought, since he didn't commence writing until the age of forty-eight. The school seemingly had inner and outer circles, and Plotinus himself was clearly an inspiring and sympathetic teacher who took a deep interest in the philosophical and spiritual progress of his students. Porphyry tells us that when he was suffering from severe depression Plotinus straight away visited him in his lodgings to help him. His concern for others is also illustrated by the fact that he was entrusted with the personal education of many orphans and the care of their property and careers. The reconciliation of this worldly involvement with the encouragement to lead a life of contemplation is encapsulated in Porphyry's comment that "he was present to himself and others at the same time."

The *Enneads* of Plotinus is the edition of his treatises arranged by his pupil Porphyry who tried to put shape to the collection he had inherited by organizing it into six sets of nine treatises (hence the name *"Enneads")* that led the reader through the levels of Plotinus' universe, from the physical world to Soul, Intellect and, finally, to the highest principle, the One. Although Plotinus undoubtedly had a clearly structured metaphysical system by the time he began committing himself to expressing his thought in written form, the treatises themselves are not systematic expositions, but rather explorations of particular themes and issues raised in interpreting Plato and other philosophical texts read in the School. In fact, to achieve his

neat arrangement Porphyry was sometimes driven even to dividing certain treatises (e.g., III.2–3; IV.3–5, and VI.4–5).

Although Plotinus' writings are not transcripts of his seminars, but are directed to the reader, they do, nevertheless, convey the sort of lively debate that he encouraged in his school. Frequently he takes for granted that a particular set of ideas is already familiar as having been treated in an earlier seminar that may or may not be found in the written text. For this reason it is useful for the reader to have some idea of the main philosophical principles of his system as they can be extracted from the *Enneads* as a whole.

Plotinus regarded himself as a faithful interpreter of Plato whose thought lies at the core of his entire project. But Plato's thought, whilst definitive, does according to Plotinus require careful exposition and clarification, often in the light of other thinkers such as Aristotle and the Stoics. It is because of this creative application of different traditions of ancient thought to the interpretation of Plato that Plotinus' version of Platonism became, partly through the medium of later Platonists such as Porphyry, Iamblichus (245–325), and Proclus (412–485), an influential source and way of reading both Plato and Aristotle in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and up to the early 19th century, when scholars first began to differentiate Plato and "Neoplatonism." His thought, too, provided early Christian theologians of the Latin

and particularly of the Byzantine tradition, with a rich variety of metaphysical concepts with which to explore and express difficult doctrinal ideas. His fashioning of Plato's ideas into a consistent metaphysical structure, though no longer accepted as a uniquely valid way of approaching Plato, was influential in promoting the notion of metaphysical systems in early modern philosophy. More recently increasing interest has centered on his exploration of the self, levels of consciousness, and his expansion of discourse beyond the levels of normal ontology to the examination of what lies both above and beneath being. His thought continues to challenge us when confronted with the issue of humanity's nature and role in the universe and of the extent and limitations of human knowledge.

Whilst much of Plotinus' metaphysical structure is recognizably an interpretation of Plato it is an interpretation that is not always immediately obvious just because it is filtered through several centuries of developing Platonic thought, itself already overlaid with important concepts drawn from other schools. It is, nevertheless, useful as a starting point to see how Plotinus attempts to bring coherence to what he believed to be a comprehensive worldview expressed in the Platonic dialogues. The Platonic Forms are central. They become for him an intelligible universe that is the source and model of the physical universe. But aware of Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic Forms as lifeless causes he takes

on board Aristotle's concept of god as a self-thinker to enable him to identify this intelligible universe as a divine Intellect that thinks itself as the Forms or Intelligibles. The doctrine of the Forms as the thoughts of god had already entered Platonism, but not as the rigorously argued identity that Plotinus proposed. Moreover the Intelligibles, since they are identical with Intellect, are themselves actively intellectual; they are intellects. Thus Plato's world of Forms has become a complex and dynamic intelligible universe in which unity and plurality, stability, and activity are reconciled.

Now although the divine Intellect is one it also embraces plurality, both because its thoughts, the Intelligibles, are many and because it may itself be analyzed into thinker and thought. Its unity demands a further principle, which is the cause of its unity. This principle, which is the cause of all unity and being but does not possess unity or being in itself, he calls the One, an interpretation of the Idea of the Good in Plato's *Republic* that is "beyond being" and that may be seen as the simple (hence "one") source of all reality. We thus have the first two of what subsequently became known as the three Hypostases, the One, Intellect, and Soul, the last of which acts as an intermediary between the intelligible and physical universes. This last Hypostasis takes on all the functions of transmitting form and life that may be found in Plato, although Plato himself does not always

make such a clear distinction between soul and intellect. Thus the One is the ultimate source of all, including this universe, which is then prefigured in Intellect and transmitted through Soul to become manifest as our physical universe. Matter, which receives imperfectly this expression, is conceived not as an independently existing counter-principle, a dangerously dualist notion, but is in a sense itself a product of the One, a kind of non-being that, while being nothing specific in itself, nevertheless is not simply not there.

But this procession from an ultimate principle is balanced by a return movement at each level of reality that fully constitutes itself only when it turns back in contemplation of its producer. And so the whole of reality is a dynamic movement of procession and return, except for matter, which has no life of its own to make this return; it is inert. This movement of return, which may be traced back to the force of "love" in Plato or Aristotle's final cause, is characterized by Plotinus as a cognitive activity, a form of contemplation, weaker at each successive level, from Intellect through discursive reasoning to the merest image of rational order as expressed in the objects of the physical universe.

The human individual mirrors this structure to which we are all related at each level. For each of us has a body and soul, an intellect, and even something within us that relates to the One. While it is the nature of soul to give life

to body, the higher aspect of our soul also has aspirations toward intellect, the true self, and even beyond. This urge to return corresponds to the cosmic movement of return. But the tension between soul's natural duty to body and its origins in the intelligible can be, for the individual, a source of fracture and alienation in which the soul becomes over-involved and overwhelmed by the body and so estranged from its true self. Plotinus encourages us to make the return or ascent, but at the same time attempts to resolve the conflict of duties by reconciling the two-fold nature of soul as life-giving and contemplative.

This is the general framework within which important traditional philosophical issues are encountered, discussed and resolved, but always in a spirit of inquiry and ongoing debate. Issues are frequently encountered in several different contexts, each angle providing a different insight. The nature of the soul and its relationship to the body is examined at length (IV) using the Aristotelian distinctions of levels of soul (vegetative, growth, sensitive, rational) whilst maintaining the immortal nature of the transcendent soul in Platonic terms. The active nature of the soul in sense-perception is maintained to preserve the principle that incorporeals cannot be affected by corporeal reality. A vigorous discussion (VI.4 and 5) on the general nature of the relationship of incorporeals to body explores in every detail and in great depth the way in which incorporeals act on body. A universe that is the

product of design is reconciled with the freedom of the individual. And, not least, the time-bound nature of the physical universe and human reason is grounded in the life of Intellect, which subsists in eternity. Sometimes, however, Plotinus seems to break outside the framework of traditional metaphysics: the nature of matter and the One, each as non-being, though in a different sense, strains the terminology and structure of traditional ontology; and the attempt to reconcile the role of the individual soul within the traditional Platonic distinction of transcendent and immanent reality leads to a novel exploration of the nature of the self, the "I."

It is this restless urge for exploration and inquiry that lends to the treatises of Plotinus their philosophical vitality. Whilst presenting us with a rich and complexly coherent system, he constantly engages us in philosophical inquiry. In this way each treatise presents us with new ideas and fresh challenges. And, for Plotinus, every philosophical engagement is not just a mental exercise but also contributes to the rediscovery of the self and our reintegration with the source of all being, the Platonic aim of "becoming like god."

While Plotinus, like Plato, always wishes to engage his audience to reflect for themselves, his treatises are not easy reading, partly no doubt because his own audience was already familiar with many of his basic ideas and, more importantly, had been exposed in his seminars

to critical readings of philosophical texts that have not survived to our day. Another problem is that the treatises do not lay out his thought in a systematic way but take up specific issues, although always the whole system may be discerned in the background. Sometimes, too, the exact flow of thought is difficult to follow because of an often condensed mode of expression.

Because we are convinced that Plotinus has something to say to us today, we have launched this series of translations and commentaries as a means of opening up the text to readers with an interest in grappling with the philosophical issues revealed by an encounter with Plotinus' own words and arguments. Each volume will contain a new translation, careful summaries of the arguments and structure of the treatise, and a philosophical commentary that will aim to throw light on the philosophical meaning and import of the text.

John M. Dillon
Andrew Smith

Abbreviations

Addenda	*Addenda et Corrigenda ad Textum et Apparatum Lectionum*. In *Plotini Opera*. edd. P. Henry & H.-R. Schwyzer, vol. 3. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, 304–325.
DK	Diels, H., and W. Kranz: *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1960.
HS$_1$	*Plotini Opera* (editio maior). edd. P. Henry & H.-R. Schwyzer, 3 vols. Paris/Leiden: Desclée de Brouwer and Brill, 1951–1973.
HS$_2$	*Plotini Opera* (editio minor, with revised text). edd. P. Henry & H.-R. Schwyzer, 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964–1982.

SVF *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta. Collegit Ioannes ab Arnim, Vol. I–IV. Editio stereotypa editiones primae (MCMV).* Stuttgart: Teubner, 1964.

TLG Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. A Digital Library of Greek Literature.

Acknowledgments

I WISH TO THANK JOHN DILLON and Andrew Smith for their invitation to contribute to this series. I would like to thank the Gerda Henkel Stiftung for their support of my work while preparing this volume. And I wish to thank my colleagues who discussed my work with me, especially: Christoph Horn, Irmgard Männlein-Robert, Svetla Slaveva-Griffin, and Christian Tornau. Peter Adamson was so kind as to let me read his valuable article on the *daimôn* before it was published. Paul Kalligas' commentary and Matthieu Guyot's translation with notes were very helpful. I would also like to thank Gale Carr from Parmenides Publishing. My warmest thanks go to John Dillon for discussing my translation and commentary with me.

Introduction to the Treatise

The present treatise, III.4 [15] *On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit*, or to be more precise, *On the Daimôn that Received Us by Lot*[1]—lively and at times perplexing, devoted to serious questions about how the mind effects ethical choice—is not among the works of Plotinus that have been intensely studied.[2] The complete translations of the *Enneads* naturally include it (with notes); but no single translation with commentary, no monograph, and only a few articles address the treatise and its topic. Interest in this treatise has mostly been limited to the theory of the

1 On the translation of the title see Commentary on the Title.

2 Critical edition: Henry-Schwyzer 1951–1973, vol. I; Henry-Schwyzer 1964–1982, vol. I. Translations with notes and/or commentary: Armstrong 1966–1988, vol. III; Bréhier 1954, vol. II; Harder/Beutler/Theiler 1956–1971, vol. I; MacKenna 1969; Ferwerda 1984; Igal 1985; Faggin 1992; Radice 2003; Guyot 2003; Kalligas 2010; Gerson 2017. Introduction and commentary: Kalligas 2014.

transmigration of souls or the connection to magic, that is, to the episode of the evocation of Plotinus' *daimôn* in the *Life of Plotinus*.[3]

This neglect is understandable. At first sight the text is a curious mixture of a general theory of the soul with demonology, written in a style that moves quickly, is not always clear at the change of topics, pauses to consider an objection, and defers to some other time a fuller investigation of a topic just raised. While ancient theories of the soul are still of interest to philosophers and intellectual historians, the central concern with demonology has ruffled some readers. Gerson confesses his objection in a *praeteritio*:

3 On the topic of magic see Armstrong 1955; Brisson 1992; Dodds 1951 (Annex II, iii, A Séance in the Iseum); Edwards 1991; Helleman 2010; Merlan 1953. On the topic of the transmigration of souls see Cole 1992 (74–78 on reincarnation; III.4 is quoted on 74–75; the article is mostly concerned with the question of how to reconcile the idea of reincarnation with other statements about the souls of animals); Rich 1957 (on reincarnation; III.4 is quoted a couple of times); Stamatellos 2013 (on reincarnation, with some references to III.4 and with further references to other authors treating the topic). On the *daimôn* see Adamson 2017 (the only article which treats the topic of the *daimôn* thoroughly); Aubry 2008a, 264–268 (on the topic of interiority); Corrias 2013 (on Plotinus and Ficino); Lepajoe 1998 (brief and rather general); Rist 1963b (this is the only article Kalligas 2014, 677 mentions; it barely treats treatise III.4, but discusses mostly the *daimonion* of Socrates); Timotin 2012, 286–300. Bréhier's notice (Bréhier 1954, III, 61–63), Guyot's introduction (Guyot 2003, 331–337) and Kalligas' introduction (Kalligas 2014, 481–488) provide good brief introductions to the treatise.

"I have kept mostly silent about some very exotic topics, such as magic, astral bodies, and guardian angels, which undoubtedly do have some place in a complete picture of Plotinus as a thinker. I do not, though, think that they have a place in a philosophy book, or at any rate a contemporary philosophy book."[4]

Admittedly Plotinus' text makes a number of surprising statements about the *daimôn* that guides the human soul; he mentions, for instance, the *daimôn* of a *daimôn*. Most fundamentally, however, Plotinus wants to interpret Plato and to integrate his various statements about *daimones* into one theory, but this leads to some views that are, if not exotic, then at least strange on first encounter. Finally, the treatise's structure seems slightly erratic; it begins with a general theory of the soul in Chapter 1, then discusses the transmigration of the soul in Chapter 2, which leads to the first discussion of the *daimôn* in Chapter 3; Chapter 4 comes back to the soul in general; Chapters 5 and 6 discuss various issues with the theory presented in Chapter 3, sometimes jumping from one question to the next as if Plotinus were responding to a meandering

4 Gerson 1994, XVII. The two main monographs on Plotinus' theory of the soul do not approach the topic of the *daimôn* in III.4 as part of psychology; Blumenthal 1971a quotes a couple of passages, but only those treating the soul in general from Chapters 1, 2, and 4. Caluori 2015 does not quote treatise III.4 at all; the term *daimôn* is not found in the index.

classroom discussion.[5] A curious demonology and fluid structure should, however, not distract the historian of philosophy from the significant philosophical issues with which Plotinus and his students were grappling.

Indeed, a closer look reveals the philosophical purpose and earnestness of these very features. In essence, the treatise performs an intense rationalization of Platonic demonology, itself not a coherent position, so as to work toward a theory of mind. Therefore, Plotinus' thoughts on the *daimôn* are not only relevant, as Gerson thinks, for a "complete picture of Plotinus as a thinker." Rather the treatise intends discussion of ideas on the soul, the self, and self-consciousness to answer discrepancies in Plato's remarks on demonology, and in so doing constructs a theory of the mind as the agent and activity responsible for ethical choice and the conduct of life.[6] Plotinus' innovative theory is a response to a strong and ongoing current of thought in the philosophical tradition.

This introduction briefly presents pre-Platonic remarks on *daimones* before addressing directly the Platonic material that was Plotinus' main stimulus, along

5 See Timotin 2012, 288: "le traité étant organisé de manière peu rigoureuse comme un enchaînement de questions et réponses dont le lien n'est pas toujours évident et dont la raison n'est donnée, fort probablement, que par l'intérêt particulier que l'auditoire de Plotin y portait." See also Armstrong 1967, 211; 219.

6 Dillon 2001, 6 notes both the interest and the difficulty of this topic.

with some middle Platonic and Stoic thinking on the issue.[7] The main focus of the introduction is the analysis of Plotinus' theory itself and its systematic philosophical points, that is, the theory of the soul involved in this treatise and his thoughts on *daimones*. The last part of the introduction will present late ancient theories of the *daimôn* that do not follow Plotinus' lead. My hope here is to explain the qualities of Plotinus' innovative thinking on the human psyche.

I. PRE-PLATONIC DEMONOLOGY

The notion of *daimôn* is well attested in early Greek literature and philosophy.[8] *Daimôn* can be a synonym for "god" or denote a lesser divine being. Often it is connected to the verb *daiomai* (to distribute), and through that to the notion of fate.[9] Detienne speaks of the "ambiguity" of the notion which can refer to the soul as *daimôn* and to the guardian *daimôn*.[10] It is even possible to distinguish the following six meanings:[11] 1) gods or lesser divine beings;

7 On demonology see ter Vrught-Lentz 1976; Timotin 2012; Ukert 1850; Usener 1896.

8 See ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 598–613.

9 Andres 1914, 102; Kalligas 2014, 482n3 (III.4); Timotin 2012, 13–15; ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 599.

10 Detienne 1959b, 20.

11 Dyson 2009, 235 presents a slightly different typology; he does not enumerate "natural forces" or "the souls of the dead," but instead "evil

2) natural forces; 3) fate; 4) the souls of the dead that have become immortal divine beings; 5) tutelary spirits; 6) internalizations of the term. Overlaps between different meanings are common.

1. Gods or lesser divine beings

Homer uses the notion of *daimôn* regularly. Sometimes it seems a metrical alternative for *theos*, but it often denotes divinity in a less precise sense than *theos*. When Homer employs *theos* the reader will usually know the identity of the god. The word *daimôn* on the other hand denotes a manifest divine power, but not a known, individual god. The effect of a *daimôn* can be good or evil.[12] The word *daimôn* is usually used by the characters themselves and not by the narrator's voice, which suggests that author and audience enjoy a greater knowledge than characters.[13] Teucer, for instance, accuses a *daimôn* of breaking his bowstring, while the reader knows that

spirits" and "luck." For another list of meanings (including Christian sources for a large part) see Owen 1931.

12 See Andres 1914, 102; Brenk 1986, 2071–2082; Timotin 2012, 16–19; ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 600–601; Ukert 1850, 140–143; Wilford 1965.

13 Brenk 1986, 2074; 2076–2077; Jörgensen 1904, 366 et pass.; Mirelli 2012, 45–46; Wilford 1965, 218–220.

it was Zeus himself.[14] Usener speaks, in this case, of "Augenblicksgötter."[15]

Presocratic philosophers seemed to have used the notion as a synonym for *theos*. Two reports on Thales explain that he assumed that the cosmos was full of *daimones* (Aetius) or full of gods (Aristotle).[16] Plutarch reports that Pythagoras (and later on Plato and Xenocrates) assumed that *daimones* are located between human beings and gods.[17]

2. Natural forces

Daimones are regarded as natural forces immanent in trees, rivers, or rocks. The power in nature is seen as divine, but of a lesser kind than the gods themselves. These natural forces can be good or evil. Even sickness like the plague can be called a *daimôn*.[18] The *daimôn* can also be seen as an avenging spirit.[19]

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14 See Homer, *Iliad* 15, 461–470. See Jörgensen 1904

15 Usener 1896, 292 (the whole chapter is entitled "Augenblicksgötter").

16 See ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 612. See Thales, *Testimonia* 11A23 (Aetius I 7, 11 [D. 301]); Stobaeus, *Anthologium* I 1, 29b3 and Thales, *Testimonia* 11A22 (Aristotle, *On the Soul* I, 411a8).

17 Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 25, 360D. See also ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 613.

18 Andres 1914, 105–106; Dodds 1951, 41–42.

19 Timotin 2012, 26–31.

3. Fate

In some instances, the word *daimôn* has to be understood as "fate"; it seems to be almost a synonym for *tychê*, *moira*, or *anankê*, for instance in Euripides or Empedocles.[20] In passages in Homer, *daimôn* also seems to suggest this meaning: for instance, when Odysseus speaks of the *daimôn* or fate that has cast him ashore or the *daimôn* that had him wandering.[21]

4. The souls of the dead

Daimones can be divine beings in the narrow senses presented above, but also divine beings which were once the souls of human beings. Sometimes, these quondam human souls are called heroes and distinguished from *daimones*, but other authors call them *daimones*.[22] Hesiod, for instance, reports that the gods made a "golden race" who lived without sorrow and then passed away;[23] now "they are fine spirits upon the earth, guardians of mortal

20 See Andres 1914, 107; Heinze 1892, 90; Kalligas 2014, 482 (III.4); and especially Timotin 2012, 19–26 with a number of references and examples. On Empedocles see Detienne 1959a.

21 See Homer, *Odyssey* 6, 172; 24, 306.

22 Usener 1896, 248–253.

23 Hesiod, *Works and Days* 109–121.

human beings."[24] There is also a fragment of Empedocles in which *daimones* are presented as souls who have fallen into being.[25]

Detienne argues that both the belief in *daimones* in the general sense (1) and in the sense of the souls of the dead were common among the Pythagoreans.[26]

5. Tutelary spirits

Daimones are conceived of as guides for human beings. Athena, for instance, is present at the side of Odysseus or of Telemachus and guides and comforts them.[27] While in Homer the guidance is attributed to a god who is closely linked to the respective hero, other authors develop the idea of "a special category of spirits"

24 Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 122–123. See Heinze 1892, 84; Andres 1914, 103. Plato quotes this passage in *Cratylus* 397e5–398a2 and *Republic* V 469a1–2.

25 Empedocles, *Fragments* 115. See Detienne 1959a, 3; Detienne 1958, 273–274; Ukert 1850, 151.

26 Detienne 1959b, 18–24. On Pythagorean demonology see also Detienne 1958; Detienne 1963 and Ukert 1850, 149–150.

27 Kalligas 2014, 483 (III.4). See for instance Homer, *Odyssey* 3, 26–27 where Athena promises Telemachus that something divine would prompt him when he has to speak. Middle Platonic authors interpret this as the intervention of the *daimôn* or the *daimonion*. See Plutarch, *On the Daimonion of Socrates* 580C; Apuleius, *On the God of Socrates* 24, 177–178; Maximus of Tyre, *Discourses* 8, 5.

whose task it is to "look after" human beings that are allotted to them.[28]

The *daimones* Hesiod speaks of, the souls of the golden race who passed away,[29] become "guardians of mortal human beings."[30] In general, however, the *daimones* in the sense of tutelary spirits are not necessarily former human souls; they can also be divine beings which were never human.[31] Pindar speaks of a *daimôn* attending to a person: "I will honor in my mind the *daimôn* that attends me from day to day, tending it to the best of my ability."[32] Menander writes: "A spirit stands by every man/as soon as he is born, a guide through the mystery of life, a good presence (*agathos*) . . ."[33] This belief seems to have been common among the Pythagoreans as well.[34]

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28 Kalligas 2014, 483 (III.4). See also Dodds 1951, 42–43.

29 Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 109–121.

30 Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 122–123. See Heinze 1892, 84; Andres 1914, 103–104. Plato quotes this passage in *Cratylus* 397e5–398a2 and *Republic* V 469a1–2. On the passage in Hesiod and Plato's usage of it see O'Connor 2007.

31 See Brenk 1986, 2082; but also Timotin 2012, 31–34 who presents both categories in one chapter.

32 Pindar, *Pythian Odes* III, 108–109. The translation by Race translates *daimôn* with "fortune."

33 Menander, fragment 714. Reported by Plutarch, *On the Tranquillity of Mind* 474b.

34 Detienne 1959b, 18–24.

6. Internalization

From early on, we can discern a tendency to internalize the *daimôn* or to reflect on the issue of internal and external impulses for thoughts and actions. In Homer, we find "a notable tendency to externalize the process of decision-making, especially if someone is depicted as acting on impulse," for instance when Odysseus says that a "god put it into my mind."[35] Athena once "tells Telemachus that he will think some things in his *phrenes*, and that some force called *daimôn* will suggest others"; some ideas, in other words, are supposed to come from his "conscious thought, others from inspiration."[36] In these cases, it is unclear whether we should understand this as an external divine being inspiring him or as a part of his mind which seems external to him.[37] *Daimones* are invoked to explain "purely internal psychological processes that, because of their inexplicable character, are projected onto the external world as the mysterious interventions of certain indeterminate and uncontrollable supernatural entities,"[38]

35 Dillon 2001, 4–5n6. See above note 27.

36 Wilford 1965, 227 (for the quotation) and 223–224 (on *daimoni isos* and the question of the unconscious).

37 See Aubry 2008a, 255–257.

38 Kalligas 2014, 482 (III.4). See also Brenk 1986, 2073–2076; Dodds 1951, 1–18; Timotin 2012, 34–35.

they seem to be in the individual being and outside,[39] and resemble, in some ways, "the working of what we should call the unconscious mind."[40]

In philosophy, the tendency to internalize and thereby rationalize the idea of a divine influence and a guardian spirit can be found early too. Heraclitus, for instance, rationalizes the belief in guardian spirits when he writes that the character (*êthos*) is one's *daimôn*.[41] What he tries to point out, against some common superstition, is that we should not attribute what happens to us and what we do to an external force. On the contrary—and here we see perhaps the first great and ongoing correction of popular belief by philosophy—character determines our life.

Democritus makes a related point when he writes that *eudaimonia* does not consist in possessions or gold, but that the soul is the *oikêtêrion daimonos*, that is, the dwelling-place of a *daimôn*; if it is good, one will be happy.[42]

Despite the philosopher's corrections, the notion of *daimôn* continues to vacillate on the same lines of ambiguity. Later authors could thus find contradictory meanings in the tradition and in contemporary attitudes.

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39 Gernet 1917, 319, writes that the *daimôn* is "à la fois hors de l'individu et en lui."

40 Wilford 1965, 222. The uncontrollable force addressed with the formula of *daimoni isos* is an example for such a tendency; it is used in the *Iliad* when someone "has ceased to be his normal self" and is acting beyond the usual norms of behavior, as if under the spell of some divine power (Wilford 1965, 221, 223–224).

41 Heraclitus, *Fragments* 22B119.

42 Democritus, *Fragments* 170–171.

Plato's different meanings can be traced back to previous usages; and in the Middle Platonic authors similar tendencies can be seen. While most of the usages assume that a *daimôn* is an external force, the last meaning (6) is particularly important for Plotinus' text. The effort to internalize the *daimôn*, already apparent in Plato, is also picked up in some Middle Platonic texts, and especially among the later Stoic authors.

II. PLATONIC DEMONOLOGY

Plato's thoughts on *daimones* do not form a coherent demonology. In the *Symposium*, Plato presents *daimones* as mediators between gods and men (202d11–e4). The myths of the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* attribute to a *daimôn* the role of a guide of the soul. In the *Phaedo*, it is said to have received man as a lot and to guide the soul after death to judgment (107d5–108b3). In the *Republic*, the soul chooses the *daimôn* (X 617e1–2); then, after the choice of a life, the *daimôn* is set as a "guardian" (*phulax*) and "fulfiller" (*apoplêrôtês*) of the completion of this life (X 620d8–e1; Emlyn-Jones/Preddy, slightly revised). In the *Timaeus*, the *daimôn* is the highest part of the soul, that is, the *nous* (90a2–7). Plato's several evolving, or even opportunistic, usages of the term do not constitute a coherent theory. Furthermore, he also speaks about Socrates' *daimonion*, something like a divine voice that frequently warns him not to do or say something. In what follows, I present

various aspects of Platonic demonology, mostly insofar as they are relevant to the Plotinian transformation.[43]

1. Mediators

The first meaning of *daimôn* stems from a very common and traditional sense that Plato took over from pre-Platonic ideas where *daimôn* is a divine being like a god or inferior to the gods.

In the *Apology* Socrates defends himself by saying that he must believe in the gods if he believes in something daimonic since there cannot be *daimonia* without *daimones*, and *daimones* are either gods themselves or the children of gods (27b3–28a1). Other dialogues mention similar ideas. In the myth of the soul in the *Phaedrus* *daimones* follow the god to whom they belong; they are lesser divine beings, linked to a specific god (246e4–247a4). The *Timaeus* attributes to lesser gods a significant role in the creation of the universe (*Timaeus* 40d6–41d3; 69b–72a). In the *Laws* Plato mentions temples for gods and *daimones* (VIII 848d1–2).

In the *Symposium* Plato is even more specific, defining *daimones* as beings between gods and men. In Diotima's speech Eros is called a "great *daimôn*" (202d14) and "everything daimonic is between god and the mortal"

43 For a more detailed picture see especially Timotin 2012.

(202d14–e1; my translation). It functions as a mediator between gods and human beings (202e3–7). The central and innovative point is the mediating function: without *daimones*, there would be a gap in the universe between the immortal gods and mortals.

In the *Cratylus* Plato gives both an etymology for *daimôn* and presents the case in which a good person can become a *daimôn*:

"This, then, I think, is what he certainly means to say of the daemons: because they were wise and knowing (*daêmones*) he called them daemons, and in the old form of our language the two words are the same. Now he and all the other poets are right, who say that when a good man dies he has a great portion and honor among the dead, and becomes a daemon, a name which is in accordance with the other name of wisdom. And so I assert that every good man, whether living or dead, is of daemonic nature, and is rightly called a daemon" (398b5–c4; Fowler, slightly revised).

While the passages quoted earlier appear to distinguish clearly between human beings and gods, now a transition from human to *daimonic* nature seems to be possible. Plotinus will consider both ideas, the conception of the *daimôn* as a being higher than humans and as a means of elevating the human into a *daimôn*.

2. Tutelary daemons

In the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, *daimones* are mentioned in the final myths as guides of the soul. In the myth in the *Phaedo* Socrates says:

"The story goes like this: When each individual has died, the *daimôn* of each one that he was allotted when he was alive undertakes to lead him to some spot where those who are gathered together are compelled to submit themselves to judgment and then make their way to Hades with that guide with whom it has been ordained that those from this world are to go to the next. When they have experienced there those things that they have to, and have waited as long as required, another guide conveys them back here after many long periods of time" (*Phaedo* 107d5–e4; Emlyn-Jones/Preddy; slightly revised).

According to this theory each human being has a *daimôn* during his life, and this *daimôn* leads the soul after the separation from the body into the other world. After the time spent in the other world, being punished or rewarded, the soul is led back by "another guide," that is, a new *daimôn*. Nothing is said about the *daimôn*'s function during life in the final myth of the dialogue, which only focuses on its function as a guide in the afterlife. A guide is necessary on the way to the underworld as there is not a simple path, but a confusing tangle of paths.

Furthermore, the guide has to ensure that the soul does not linger in the visible world:

"Now the well disciplined and prudent soul follows and doesn't fail to recognize its situation. But the one that lusts after the needs of the body, such as I talked about earlier, having fluttered around it and the visible region for a long time, and having resisted and suffered a great deal, is led away by force and with difficulty by his appointed *daimôn*" (*Phaedo* 108a6–b3; Emlyn-Jones/Preddy, slightly revised).

While the good soul will follow the guide obediently, a bad soul has to be forced into the underworld and to judgment by a *daimôn*. Plato here offers no positive picture of a guardian angel meant to protect and save the soul. The *daimôn* is part of the punitive apparatus of the underworld.

The final myth of the *Republic* adds details and, it must be said, some tensions and contradictions. Here, the *daimôn* is not mentioned as the guide to judgment, but the reader learns how the new *daimôn* is assigned to the soul. After judgment is declared and the time of reward or punishment served, the souls are led in front of Lachesis where they are told: "The *daimôn* does not obtain you by lot, but you shall choose your *daimôn*" (*Republic* X 617e1–2; my translation). The first part of this sentence seems to correct the statement in the *Phaedo* according to which

the *daimôn* was allotted to the soul in life (107d6–7).[44] The *daimôn* is not an assigned guide of the soul, but is chosen by the soul. What is the meaning of this choice of a *daimôn*? The next sentence speaks about a choice of life (*Republic* X 617e2). The choice of the *daimôn* seems to be little more than this choice of the next life, or the choice of the soul's fate. What Plato underlines in this passage is that the soul cannot blame someone else, a *daimôn*, fate, or Necessity for his or her life: "The responsibility is the chooser's; god is not to be blamed" (*Republic* X 617e4–5; Emlyn-Jones/Preddy). A little later, after the choice of lives, the *daimôn* is mentioned again as the soul's guardian:

"So when all the souls had chosen their lives, according to the lot of the draw, they approached Lachesis in order and she gave each the *daimôn* they had chosen to escort them as guardian (*phulax*) through their lives and as fulfiller (*apoplêrôtês*) of their choices. This *daimôn* led the soul first toward Clotho, under her hand and the spinning of the whirling spindle, ratifying the fate the soul had chosen by lot. After receiving her touch, the *daimôn* again led the soul toward Atropos' spinning, which made the assignment irreversible. And then, without turning round, it went beneath the throne of Necessity" (*Republic* X 620d4–621a1; Emlyn-Jones/Preddy, slightly revised).

44 See Kalligas 2014, 483 (III.4).

This passage returns to the conception of the *daimôn* of strong agency of the *Phaedo* (107d5–108b3) in that the *daimôn* is the "guardian" and "fulfiller" of the soul's choice but departs in the emphasis that the soul here chooses its *daimôn*. This myth clearly underlines the responsibility and moral agency of the soul. But positing a single choice in the underworld of the soul's future life seems necessarily to constrain the scope for action the soul has once the chosen life has begun.[45] This issue will be one of Plotinus' major concerns in his treatise.

A passage in Book 9 of the *Laws* mentions a *daimôn* who seems to act as a friendly, protective guardian spirit. Plato speaks about a case in which someone intends and tries to kill someone but does not succeed. He is to be regarded "as a slayer" and to be tried for murder. But instead of the death penalty, exile is supposed to be his punishment (IX 876e6–877b2). The reason for this involves the role his *daimôn* played:

"Yet out of respect for his escape from sheer ill-fortune and for his *daimôn*—who in pity alike for him and for the wounded man saved the wound of the one from proving fatal and the fortune and crime of the other from proving accursed,—in gratitude to this *daimôn* . . ." (IX 877a2–6; Bury slightly revised).

45 See on this topic in Plato Destrée 2014, who shows that Plato does not limit the soul's responsibility.

In downgrading murder to aggravated assault, the *daimôn* has taken pity on both the wounded and the wounder and saved both of them, the one's life and the other one from committing this crime. This is the action of a protective guardian spirit, clearly outside of and above the human being's intentions and choice. Nowhere else in Plato's work does such a helpful spirit intervene in human life. The *daimones* of the *Phaedo* (107d5–108b3) and the *Republic* (617e1–2; 620d4–621a1) are guards who oversee the course and fate of life, but they do not seem to be protectors of the soul who intervene to help her.[46] Therefore, this passage seems unique and isolated.[47] Plotinus will decidedly not follow its lead. Plotinus' *daimôn* never assumes such an active role.

3. The highest part of the soul

In the *Timaeus*, in addition to his customary practice of speaking of *daimones* as divine beings, Plato employs the notion in a different sense altogether, as the highest part of the strata of the soul. In the last part of the text, Plato speaks about the soul, its parts and their location in the body. The lowest part of the soul is said to live in the region of the stomach, the middle part in the chest and

46 See also Timotin 2012, 61.

47 In the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus*, however, we can read about "all whom a good daimon inspired in life" (371c).

the highest part in the head. The highest part is thereby separated from the lower parts and lives as if on the acropolis.[48] The highest part, the rational part, or *nous,* is then mentioned again later in the text:

"And as regards the most lordly kind of our soul, we must conceive of it in this wise: we declare that God has given to each of us, as his daemon, that kind of soul which is housed in the top of our body and which raises us—seeing that we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant—up from earth towards our kindred in the heaven" (90a2–7; Bury).

The highest part of the soul which resides in the head is obviously the *nous*. But here Plato describes it as the *daimôn* given to us by god. This *daimôn* is certainly not an external divinity, but part of the whole soul or the human being. This conception internalizes the *daimôn*: no longer an external guide of the soul, it is the internal and native guiding part of the soul. By calling the *nous daimôn* Plato underlines its important quality. As he explains in the following lines in the text, it is our link to the divine (90a7–b1). And it is also what guards us if we live according to it. Human beings must tend to this internalized directing component of their souls as if it were a god.

"But he who has seriously devoted himself to learning and to true thoughts, and has exercised these qualities

48 *Timaeus* 69c–71d. The *acropolis* is mentioned in 70a6.

above all his others, must necessarily and inevitably think thoughts that are immortal and divine, if so be that he lays hold on truth, and in so far as it is possible for human nature to partake of immortality, he must fall short thereof in no degree; and inasmuch as he is for ever tending his divine part and duly magnifying that daemon who dwells along with him, he must be supremely blessed. And the way of tendance of every part by every man is one—namely, to supply each with its own congenial food and motion; and for the divine part within us the congenial motions are the intellections and revolutions of the Universe. These each one of us should follow, rectifying the revolutions within our head, which were distorted at our birth, by learning the harmonies and revolutions of the Universe, and thereby making the part that thinks like unto the object of its thought, in accordance with its original nature, and having achieved this likeness attain finally to that goal of life which is set before men by the gods as the most good both for the present and for the time to come" (*Timaeus* 90b6–d7; Bury).

To take care of the *daimôn* and to give it its proper reverence means to devote oneself to learning and knowledge, and to harmonize our inner order to the order of the universe.

Plato interiorizes the function of the guardian spirit; it is no longer conceived of as an external entity but is

part of the soul itself. At the same time, he divinizes the human intellect.[49]

Heraclitus' definition of the *daimôn* as character[50] pointed in a similar direction. And Plato's successor, Xenocrates, defined "each man's spirit (*daimôn*)" as the "soul."[51] Even though Plotinus does not state that the *daimôn* is the intellect, the idea of an interiorization of the *daimôn* is central to his thoughts.

4. Daimonion

Socrates' so-called *daimonion* continues to puzzle scholars, even though it is only mentioned a couple of times in Plato's work and in Xenophon's.[52] Apuleius and Plutarch devoted entire treatises to the topic,[53] and modern scholarship deals with it extensively.[54]

49 See Kalligas 2014, 484 (III.4).

50 See above p. 26.

51 Aristotle, *Topics* II 6, 112a37–38. See also Kalligas 2014, 484 (III.4); Schibli 1993, 154–155.

52 See for instance Plato, *Apology* 31c7–d6, 40a4–c3, 41d3–7; *Phaedrus* 242b8–c3; *Republic* VI 496c3–5; *Euthydemus* 272e3–4; *Euthyphron* 3b1–9. Xenophon, *Apology* 12–13; *Memorabilia* I 1, 2–5; IV 3, 12; IV 8, 1; IV 8, 5–6.

53 See below pp. 44–50.

54 See, for instance, Addey 2014; Brickhouse and Smith 2000; Brickhouse and Smith 2005; Brisson 2005; Dorion 2003; Dorion 2013, 275–316; Hoffmann 1985; Joyal 2005; Long 2006; McPherran 2005; Timotin 2012, 52–60; Van Riel 2005; and Weiss 2005.

The main passages in which we learn about the *daimonion* are connected to the charge against Socrates: "it claims Socrates is guilty of corrupting the young and does not acknowledge the gods that the city acknowledges, but other newfangled divinities (*daimonia kaina*)" (*Apology* 24b8–c1).[55] Socrates presents a counter-argument in which he demonstrates that someone who believes in *daimonia*, that is, something related to *daimones*, has to believe in the existence of *daimones*. And since *daimones* are either gods or the children of gods this person has to believe in gods as well (27b3–28a1).[56] The reason why he is accused of believing in new *daimonia* is clear to Socrates, who says:

"The reason for this is what you've heard me say in various places, that something god-inspired and daimonic (*theion ti kai daimonion*) comes to me, which of course Meletus put in his indictment by way of a joke. This is something that began when I was a boy; it's a kind of voice (*phonê tis*) and whenever it occurs it always diverts me away from what I was about to do, but never turns me toward it. It's this that stops me taking up politics, and a jolly good thing it does, it seems to me" (*Apology* 31c7–d6; Emlyn-Jones/Preddy, slightly revised).

The fact that the voice is consistently apotreptic, never protreptic, is a consistent feature in all the passages in the Platonic dialogues and also in the pseudo-Platonic

55 See also *Apology* 26b5; *Euthyphron* 3b1–9.

56 See above p. 28.

Theages. Socrates explains that it warns him in great and little matters.[57] In the passage quoted from the *Apology* and in the *Phaedrus* it is described as a *phonê tis*, that is, not a real voice, but something like it, maybe some sort of inner voice Socrates hears and heeds so as to forego his intended action. In the *Phaedrus* it holds him back after he has delivered his first speech; and since he had already felt awkward about his wrong picture of *Eros*, he knows instantly why the voice is holding him back: he has to deliver a second and better speech. In the *Euthydemus* the voice does not allow him to leave the bath, and a little later some people come in with whom he enters into a lively conversation.[58] In the *Republic* we learn that Socrates is the only one to have that voice; here the intention it checks was his plan to abandon philosophy.[59] In the *Apology* Socrates even goes as far as to take the non-appearance of the warning sign as a proof that something good is about to happen to him. The sign, he says, did not hold him back when he went to court that morning, nor when he spoke, even though it had done that before in many cases. Therefore, he is sure, what will happen to him, that is, his death, is a good thing.[60] The *Apology* reveals a

57 See *Apology* 40a4–6.

58 *Phaedrus* 242b8–c3; *Euthydemus* 272e3–4.

59 *Republic* VI 496c3–5.

60 See *Apology* 40a2–c3; 41d3–7.

deep-rooted trust in the *daimonic* voice's reliability; the absence of the sign is a sign or proof itself.

Xenophon in the *Memorabilia* presents the voice along the lines of a more common form of divination: it tells Socrates *what to do* and *what not to do*.[61] Furthermore, in Xenophon's account and in the pseudo-Platonic *Theages*, the sign acts not only in matters regarding Socrates himself, but also regarding his friends.[62]

Even though Plato is consistent in the description of the functioning of the sign, the few passages that treat the *daimonion* raise more questions than they answer. Since most ancient authors assume that *daimones*, a *daimonic* voice, oracles, and divination exist, they have little trouble squaring Socrates' trust in the *daimonion* with his claim to rationality. One character in Plutarch's treatise on the *daimonion* seems to question this,[63] but most of the authors seem to assume that there is no contradiction between Socrates' trust in this divine voice and his rational character. Modern authors, however, seem either to assume that there is here something irrational in Socrates which is inconsistent with his claim that reason alone

61 See for instance Xenophon, *Memorabilia* IV 3, 12; IV 8, 1. See also Hoffmann 1985, 427.

62 See for instance Xenophon, *Apology* 13; *Memorabilia* I 1, 4. *Theages* 128d–131a.

63 See Plutarch, *On the Daimonion of Socrates* 579E–580C. See also Long 2006 on Plutarch's interpretation.

guides him, or they try to save the figure of a consistent Socrates by arguing that his belief in the *daimonion* does not undermine his claim to rationality.

Without resolving this tension, we can nonetheless offer some relevant clarifications. First of all, Plato never speaks of a *daimôn* when he mentions the *daimonic* voice. Nonetheless, the Middle Platonic authors and many contemporary scholars assume that it is Socrates' *daimôn* who is holding him back. In Plato, however, it is some god, possibly Apollo, who intervenes, and not the *daimôn*.[64] The expression *to daimonion* is not strictly correct either, since Plato seems to use it either as an abbreviation for *to daimonion sêmeion* or as a reference to the divinity who gives the sign.[65] The sign seems to hold him back in important but also in minor issues. It does not only intervene when a moral decision is at stake. Therefore, the interpretation of the *daimonion* as conscience is not possible.[66] Since there are situations in which Socrates cannot possibly know why the sign intervenes (as in the *Euthydemus*), it is not "rational intuition."[67] It is, as Long shows, following Plutarch, more than a mere "hunch,"

64 Brisson 2005, especially 4n11; 6; Dorion 2013, 275; Hoffmann 1985, 421; Timotin 2015, 391.

65 Dorion 2013, 275; 287–298. Xenophon uses the term a little differently (Dorion 2013, 276–287).

66 Brisson 2005, especially 4n11; 6.

67 Brickhouse and Smith 2005 show that it cannot be understood as "rational intuition."

but a "fully intelligible and intelligent message, impinging directly on Socrates' intellect."[68] Furthermore, some passages seem to be full of irony, so that we cannot always be sure about how to interpret what Socrates or Plato says about the divine sign.

Despite the fact that Middle Platonic authors showed a great deal of interest in the *daimonion*, Plotinus does not even mention or allude to it.[69]

III. MIDDLE PLATONIC AND STOIC DEMONOLOGY

A detailed overview of the development of demonology between Plato and Plotinus would make for a volume in itself, since the topic was of great interest especially for Platonic, but also for Stoic philosophers. Perhaps it is necessary to stress that the topic was of ongoing interest and decidedly not an innovation of later philosophy. Plato's immediate successors, the Middle Platonists, Philo of Alexandria and others, write about *daimones*.[70] Whereas these authors mostly develop fully-fledged demonologies, the later Stoics attempt to rationalize the idea of the guardian *daimôn*, following Plato's *Timaeus*. In what follows, I present some of the central figures of both traditions in

68 Long 2006, 70.

69 Rist 1963b tries to draw connections between Plotinus' thoughts on the *daimôn* and the *daimonion*.

70 See especially Dillon 1977 and Timotin 2012.

order to show the state of the reflections on the *daimôn* before Plotinus and as a backdrop for a better understanding of his specific interests and approach.[71]

1. The Platonic Tradition

Plato's immediate successors showed great and continuing interest in Plato's thought on *daimones* and the *daimonion*. The author of the *Epinomis*—probably Philip of Opus—integrates *daimones* into his cosmology: *daimones* are conceived of as intermediary beings (984d–985d).[72] Plato's disciple, Xenocrates, seems to have written extensively on the topic.[73] He also considers *daimones* as intermediary beings between gods and men, just as Plato had in the *Symposium*.[74] They are probably the souls of the dead who assume divine power, but are still subject to human passions. Therefore, Xenocrates assumes that *daimones* can be both good and bad; *daimones* are similar to gods in being immortal, but capable of passions like human beings.[75] They share some attributes with the gods (divine

71 See also Dillon 2004, 134–141 on Philo of Alexandria, Alcinous and Calcidius.

72 Dillon 2004, 132–133; Timotin 2012, 86–93; Timotin 2015, 382.

73 See ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 640–641; Dillon 2004, 128–131; Timotin 2012, 93–99; Timotin 2015, 382–383.

74 See also Pseudo-Plato, *Epinomis* 984de.

75 See Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 360DE; ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 614; 640–641; Dillon 2004, 131.

powers), others with human beings (subject to passions).[76] However, he diverges from Plato's general belief that divine beings are essentially good and assumes the existence of bad *daimones*, thereby integrating popular belief in evil spirits into his theory.

The Middle Platonic tradition likewise showed great interest in Socrates' *daimonion*: there are two discourses by Maximus of Tyre, a treatise by Plutarch, and one by Apuleius.[77] The authors try to integrate the testimonies about Socrates' divine sign or voice into a larger demonology.

Plutarch presents his ideas in several texts, especially in the dialogue *On the Daimonion of Socrates*. We also owe to Plutarch a great deal of what we know about Xenocrates. Generally speaking, Plutarch conceives of *daimones* as intermediary beings who supply a connection between gods and human beings.[78] There are, following Hesiod, four classes of beings: gods, *daimones*, heroes,

76 Plutarch relates that Xenocrates compared gods to equilateral triangles, *daimones* to isosceles, and human beings to scalene triangles (*Obsolescence of Oracles* 416D).

77 Maximus of Tyre, *Discourses* 8 and 9; Plutarch, *On the Daimonion of Socrates*; Apuleius, *On the God of Socrates*. See for instance Dillon 1977; Finamore 2014; Hoffmann 1985; Saudelli 2014; Soury 1942; Timotin 2012; and Timotin 2015.

78 See for instance *Isis and Osiris* 360E–361D; *Obsolescence of Oracles* 415A–B; 416E–F. See also Brenk 1986, 2117–2130; Dillon 1977, 184–230 and especially 219–221 on the guardian daemon; Finamore 2014; and ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 644.

and men. A transmutation of good souls into heroes and then into *daimones* is possible.[79] Plutarch argues against the existence of evil *daimones* in some texts, but he also attributes hunger, war, or other evil events to evil *daimones* or writes that some rites are performed not for the gods, but for evil *daimones*.[80]

The dialogue, *On the Daimonion of Socrates*, is particularly interesting, since Plutarch does not present a coherent theory but advances several ideas.[81] There is Simmias' theory about the *daimonion*, then the so-called myth of Timarchus, and finally the ideas presented by the stranger Theanor.

Simmias rejects, first of all, theories that the *daimonion* was a "vision" or that it manifested itself as a sneeze, and states that the *daimonion* presented itself as a voice. He says that Socrates was the only one to receive such messages because he was able to pick up the message sent by the *daimôn*: "the thoughts of *daimones* pass everywhere, but echo only in the ears of those who have an untroubled personality and whose soul is tranquil, 'holy' and 'daemonic' individuals, as we call them."[82] Once, the

79 Plutarch, *Obsolescence of Oracles* 415B.

80 Plutarch, *Obsolescence of Oracles* 417C–D; 418B. See also ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 644–645.

81 On the dialogue see Babut 1984; Babut 1988. On the interpretation of the *daimonion* see also Long 2006.

82 See Plutarch, *On the Daimonion of Socrates* 581A–582C; 588C–589F (589D for the literal quotation). Further quotations noted in the text.

daimonion is compared to Athena attending to Odysseus in Homer (580C–D).[83] The warning voice does not stem from some god, probably Apollo, as the occurrences in Plato suggest, but from Socrates' *daimôn*. The *daimôn* is conceived of as something like a guardian spirit, watching over Socrates. Every human being has such a guardian spirit, but Socrates is able to hear its voice; his mind is pure and therefore capable of picking up the *daimôn*'s messages, whereas normal human beings are tone deaf, with their emotions drowning out their guardian spirit.

The myth of Timarchus, which Simmias relates, presents a different theory of *daimones*. The moon is said to belong to the "terrestrial *daimones*."[84] Timarchus sees stars moving up and down, and is told that he is seeing *daimones* (591D):

"The part submerged in the body is called the soul: the part that survives destruction is commonly called Intellect, and people believe it to be within themselves, just as they believe reflections to be *in* mirrors. Those who have the right idea of it, however, call it *daimôn*, regarding it as outside themselves" (591E).

83 Plotinus uses the image as well but does not connect it to a *daimôn* or the *daimonion* (VI.5 [23] 7, 11–17).

84 Plutarch, *On the Daimonion of Socrates* 591C. On the connection of *daimones* and the moon see also *The Face on the Moon* 944C–D.

The *daimôn* is identical to the intellect, but it is said to be "external" even though we usually assume that it is a part of us. The separability of the intellect transforms the identification of the *daimôn* with the *nous* that Plato had advanced in the *Timaeus*. The *daimôn* is identified as the intellect; but it is only marginally interiorized, since it is described as separable from body and soul.

Furthermore, two passages attribute to the stranger Theanor theories of the *daimôn* as a protective spirit. Theanor has come to Lysis' grave, has performed the appropriate rites and has thereby learned that he does not have to relocate Lysis' body. His soul has already been allotted to a new *daimôn*, and his former *daimôn* is now said to guide Epaminondas: "if I am any good at guessing the pilot by the course he sets."[85] This theory describes the *daimôn* as a guardian spirit, assigned to a soul for one life. Then, the soul is allotted to another *daimôn* for the next life, while the *daimôn* takes over another soul. Theanor assumes that the guidance of the guardian spirit can be visible in the actions of the human being; it seems to assume a more active role than the myths of Plato suggest. Secondly, toward the end of the dialogue, after the relation of the myth, Theanor describes *daimones* as "retired athletes" who now care for, encourage, and help souls who are close to the goal. The *daimones* have left

85 Plutarch, *On the Daimonion of Socrates* 585F–586A.

the cycle of reincarnations; the help is not given to all souls alike, but only to those who are already close to the shore, that is, close to leaving the cycle of reincarnations themselves.[86] In this case, *daimones* are the souls of the dead, of those who have left the cycle of reincarnation and are now willing to help others achieve the same goal.

Apuleius' thoughts on *daimones* and Socrates' *daimonion* can be found in *On the God of Socrates*.[87] He seems to have preferred *deus* for his title since the term *daimôn* probably had acquired negative associations.[88] Like Plato, Apuleius defines *daimones* as intermediary beings that connect the divine and the human realm as interpreters and messengers.[89] They are living, rational beings, but differ from divine beings by being subject to passions; further they have an aery body and are eternal.[90]

Apuleius distinguished between *daimones* as souls and *daimones* as higher beings.[91] The first group is twofold. First of all, *daimones* are souls in the human body. Apuleius

86 Plutarch, *On the Daimonion of Socrates* 593D–594A.

87 See Finamore 2014.

88 See Lakmann 2004, 19–22.

89 Apuleius, *On the God of Socrates* 6, 132–137.

90 Apuleius, *On the God of Socrates* 13, 148.

91 See Lakmann 2004, 32–33 on these distinctions and the following subdivisions. On Apuleius see Dillon 1977, 306–338 and especially 317–320 on demonology.

connects this idea with the Latin notion of *genius*.[92] Furthermore, souls can become *daimones* after death and are then called *lemures* (ghosts); a good soul can become a *lar familiaris* (traditionally the tutelary god of the family) who takes care of the house and household; bad souls might become *larvae* (ghosts), and others can be *manes* (the term for the spirits of the dead, beneficent and the object of funerary cults unlike the errant and maleficent *lemures* and *larvae*).[93] The second group includes higher beings who are of a higher order and have never been in a human body. On the one hand, there are *daimones* like *Amor* or *Somnus* (lesser gods than the named Olympians, and personifications of human psychic states). On the other hand, there are personal *daimones* which have their place in the soul. They take care of the soul, warn it, guard it, and help it.[94] By distinguishing between four kinds of *daimones*, Apuleius continues several traditions which we have followed, from the pre-Platonic and Platonic sources on: a part of the soul as the *daimôn*, the souls of the dead who become *daimones*, higher divine beings, and tutelary spirits. Apuleius tries to make sense of a growing cultural phenomenon, that is, the populating of the world with *daimones*. Yet the growth in population

92 Apuleius, *On the God of Socrates* 15, 150–151. See also Kalligas 2014, 485n17 (III.4).

93 Apuleius, *On the God of Socrates* 15, 152–154.

94 Apuleius, *On the God of Socrates* 16, 154–156.

of minor deities, while no doubt of great cultural interest, does not much help with the tensions in Plato's various mentions of the daemonic.

Maximus of Tyre, like Apuleius, describes and systematizes a broad set of *daimones* tied to places and bodies. He devotes two discourses to the *daimonion*. *Daimones* are described as intermediary beings that "have dealings both with gods and with men."[95] God is "emotionless and immortal," *daimones* are "immortal and emotional" and human beings "emotional and mortal"; animals are "irrational and capable of perception" and plants "ensouled, but incapable of emotion."[96]

All the *daimones* are intermediary divine beings, but their tasks and characters vary; and to a certain degree this is explained by their former "natures that were theirs when they lived on earth"[97]:

"Some heal diseases, some dispense advice to the perplexed, some reveal what is hidden, some assist the craftsman in his work, some the traveller on his journey; some inhabit cities, some the countryside, some the seas, some the dry land. Different *daimones* are assigned homes in different human bodies: one Socrates, another Plato, another Pythagoras, another Zeno, another Diogenes. Some are terrifying, some benevolent; some concern

95 Maximus of Tyre, *Discourses* 8, 8.

96 Maximus of Tyre, *Discourses* 9, 2. See also 9, 3.

97 Maximus of Tyre, *Discourses* 9, 7.

themselves with politics, others with war. They have as many characters as men do."[98]

Healing, advice, politics, and war are among the duties and functions. Some are locally bound: they have their place and land, cities, the sea or the countryside. And others have their place in a human being, or, as Maximus puts it, in a "body." The formulation seems unusual. Plato, of course, describes the head as the place of the *daimôn*, that is, of the intellect, but other authors interiorize the *daimôn* and seem to localize it in the soul, not in the body. But, as the *daimones* which have their dwelling-place in a city or in the countryside, the personal *daimones* are also assigned a physical place, and that is in this case the body of an individual. Maximus only lists philosophers or sages, but the last sentence of the discourse suggest that most, but not all, human beings have such a guide: "Show me a wicked soul, however, and I will show you a soul which has no daemonic inhabitant or overseer."[99] Maximus only states that a wicked soul does not have such a tutelary spirit, but we probably have to assume that the lack of the divine spirit is a consequence of the wickedness, and not the other way round.

The interest in *daimones* in general and in guardian spirits in particular is widespread in the Middle Platonic

98 Maximus of Tyre, *Discourses* 8, 8. See also 9, 7.

99 Maximus of Tyre, *Discourses* 8, 8.

authors who integrate pre-Platonic and Platonic ideas into fully-fledged demonologies. Plotinus, as we shall see, will not be so eclectic and inclusive.

2. The Stoic Tradition

Stoic authors show a great interest in the *daimôn* but with a significant development; the older Stoics conceive of *daimones* as divine beings, while the more recent internalize the personal *daimôn*.[100]

Earlier Stoics seem to have distinguished between *daimones* and "a class of heroes, consisting of the souls of the dead now separated from their bodies." *Daimones* could be either good or bad and "were held to have a certain 'sympathy' with human beings and to watch over their affairs."[101] A controversial passage attributed to Chrysippus suggests that there is "a *daimôn* with each man," that is, either something like a "guardian spirit"[102] or just an innate rational faculty.[103] Earlier Stoics assume that the soul is divine, but they do not connect this with the doctrine of the *daimôn*. The change probably comes

100 Algra 2009; Brenk 1986, 2089; Kalligas 2014, 485 (III.4).

101 Rist 1969, 262. See also Algra 2009, 364; ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 642. On the "heroes" see also Long 2002, 369–372.

102 Rist 1969, 262–263. See also Dyson 2009, 239; Reydams-Schils 2005, 43.

103 Long 2002, 164.

with Posidonius, who was inspired by Plato's *Timaeus*.[104] There is one piece of evidence, from Galen, according to which "the bad man does not follow the *daimôn in himself* (*toi en hautois daimoni*)"; the *daimôn* is, according to Rist, "the individual's true self in the Platonic sense."[105]

In the later Stoics, the *daimôn* is considered a divine part given to humans by god.[106] The main reference point, especially in the later Stoics, is Plato's *Timaeus*. But Euripides' fragment: "our intellect is what in each of us is divine,"[107] and further passages in Plato and Aristotle use similar expressions of the "divine in us."[108] The *daimôn* is described as internal, but the terminology is that of a guardian spirit and overseer. Epictetus writes:

104 Rist 1969, 264–265. See also Dyson 2009, 239; Kalligas 2014, 484n13 (III.4).

105 Rist 1969, 266. See also ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 643. See Posidonius, *Fragment* 417 (Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 5, 6, 4).

106 Epictetus, *Discourses* I. 14, 11–14; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* II, 13; II, 17; V, 10; V, 27; VII, 17. See also Algra 2009, 365–369; Dyson 2009; Hausleiter 1957, 806–808; Kalligas 2014, 484 (III.4); Long 2002, 163–168; ter Vrught-Lentz 1976, 642–644.

107 Euripides, Fragment 1018.

108 See Kalligas 2014, 484n12 (III.4) quoting for instance Plato, *Republic* IX 589e4; 590d1; *Timaeus* 41c7, 88b2; Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* VIII 2, 1248a27; *Protrepticus* fragments 108 and 110. Kalligas also quotes later references where the term is used. See also below pp. 98–99.

"Yet none the less He [Zeus] has stationed by each man's side as guardian his particular genius (*daimôn*)—and has committed the man to his care—and that too a guardian who never sleeps and is not to be beguiled. For to what other guardian, better and more careful, could he have committed each one of us? Wherefore, when you close your doors and make darkness within, remember never to say that you are alone, for you are not alone; nay, God is within, and your own genius (*daimôn*) is within."[109]

The *daimôn* is a guardian (*epitropos*), sent by God to watch over us. The terminology suggests an external guardian, but it is said to be "within"; it is the intellect or the "normative self."[110]

The internalization is clear in a passage in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*:

"Walk with the gods! And he does walk with the gods, who lets them see his soul invariably satisfied with its lot and carrying out the will of that 'genius' (*daimôn*), which Zeus has given to every man as his captain (*prostatês*) and guide (*hêgemôn*), a particle (*apospasma*) of Zeus; and

109 Epictetus, *Discourses* I.14.11–14 (Oldfather, slightly revised). See Dyson 2009, 235.

110 Long 2002, 166 speaks of the "normative self." Dyson 2009 describes the *daimôn* as the "idealized self" (241) and the "normative self" (title and 242).

this is none other than each man's intelligence (*nous*) and reason (*logos*)."[111]

The *daimôn* is a "particle" of Zeus and given by god as "captain and guide" (*prostatês* and *hêgemôn*), but this guide is not external, but everyone's "intelligence and reason" (*nous* and *logos*). In a later chapter Marcus Aurelius defines *eudaimonia* as having "a good *daimôn* or a good *hêgemonikon*."[112] One is supposed to take care of the *daimôn* and serve it, keep it pure;[113] the moral action of the self is dependent on this process, as Marcus Aurelius asserts, "it is in my power to do nothing contrary to the god and the *daimôn*."[114]

In Seneca's letters we can find similar ideas. On the one hand, the indwelling *daimôn* is described as a guardian:

"God is near you, he is with you, he is within you. This is what I mean, Lucilius: a holy spirit indwells within us (*sacer intra nos spiritus sedet*). One who marks our good and bad deeds, and is our guardian (*malorum bonorumque nostrorum observator et custos*). As we treat this spirit, so are we treated by it."[115]

111 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* V, 27 (Haines, slightly modified).

112 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* VII, 17.

113 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* II, 13; II, 17.

114 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* V, 10 (Haines, slightly modified).

115 Seneca, *Letters* 41, 1–2. See also 110, 1 where Seneca writes: "for they have assigned a Genius or a Juno to every individual" (*singulis enim et Genium et Iunonem dederunt*).

On the other hand, it is defined as reason: "Reason (*Ratio*), however, is nothing else than a portion of the divine spirit (*pars divini spiritus*) set in a human body."[116]

In the later Stoics, the *daimôn* is something internal to the soul, but it is, at the same time, a divine particle that connects us to the divine.[117]

IV. THE SOUL AND THE *DAIMÔN* IN PLOTINUS

Treatise III.4 [15] starts as a continuation of treatise V.2 [11] where Plotinus discusses the One, the Intellect, and soul. V.2 ends with a brief discussion of the vegetative principle and the announcement that this discussion has to be continued (see Commentary, Chapter 1). Chapter 1 of III.4 clearly continues the discussion about the vegetative principle; then Plotinus moves on to a discussion of the dominant parts in souls and respective reincarnations (Chapter 2) which leads to the discussion of the *daimôn* in Chapter 3. But the connection is not just that of a series of questions, one leading to the other. The thoughts on *daimones* and reflections on the soul and the self are

116 Seneca, *Letters* 66, 12.

117 See Kalligas 2014, 484–485 (III.4). See also Reydams-Schils 2005, 44: the *daimôn* has "a strangely ambivalent status"; sometimes seems to be intrinsic, sometimes beyond the soul. Human reason is defined as a piece of divine reason, which goes beyond Plato's definition in the *Timaeus*.

intertwined. 1) The *daimôn* is conceived of as part of the soul: demonology is part of psychology. 2) The individual soul and the world-soul are "sisters," therefore a treatment of the soul and its *daimôn* has to consider the connections to the world-soul as well.

I first present Plotinus' thoughts on the soul (Section 1), then his account of the *daimôn* (Section 2), before coming to the systematic issues of responsibility and determinism (Section 3) and of the soul, the self and the *daimôn* (Section 4).

1. The theory of the soul in III.4 [15]

"Concerning the soul, the right course, I feel, would be to conduct our enquiry in such a way as either to arrive at solutions to the relevant problems, or, if remaining in a state of puzzlement on those points, to regard this at least as a gain, that we know what in this area does not admit of solution."[118]

At the beginning of treatise IV.3 [27] titled *Problems Concerning the Soul*, Plotinus points out the vital importance of the topic of the soul. First, "it provides knowledge about both those things of which it is the principle, and those from which it itself derives."[119] Second, "we should

118 IV.3 [27] 1, 1–4 (Dillon/Blumenthal).

119 IV.3 [27] 1, 7–8 (Dillon/Blumenthal).

be obeying the injunction of the god when he enjoins us to 'know ourselves.'"[120] The Delphic *gnôthi seauton*, the imperative to know oneself, inspired Socrates, Plato, and many other philosophers.[121] If one wants to know oneself, one has to understand what the soul is, since it is the soul, and not the body, which constitutes our essence. Knowledge of the soul is, therefore, self-knowledge. In this sense, soul is mostly understood as the individual human soul, and the inquiry is ethical and epistemological, since we are dealing with soul as the ethical instance in human beings and with its faculties (rational thought, but also sense-perception, imagination, memory, passions, and so on).

The conception of the soul as individual human soul is, however, but one part of Plotinus' understanding of the soul. The first reason he gives for the importance of the topic, the soul as source of knowledge about itself and those things above it, ties the possibility of higher knowledge, of a metaphysical conception of the world, to the soul's activities. Soul thus has an important intermediary position in the Plotinian cosmos. Dillon and Blumenthal rightly call it "the linchpin of the Platonic universe."[122] It belongs

120 IV.3 [27] 1, 8–10 (Dillon/Blumenthal).

121 See Courcelle 1974–1975, especially, on the Delphic command, vol. I; on Plotinus vol. I, 83–84. See also Horn 2000, 81–84. On treatise V.3 [49] Ham 2000; Dixsaut 2002. On the topic of self-knowledge see for instance Beierwaltes 2001; Horn 2000; Horn 2003; and Perkams 2008, 305–320.

122 Dillon and Blumenthal 2015, 18.

to the intelligible realm, it stems from the Intellect, and through the Intellect from the One,[123] but it also vivifies the sensible cosmos, the bodies, the plants. Therefore, the investigation about soul is an investigation about everything, from the highest to the lowest. In this sense, an inquiry about the soul will touch upon metaphysics, but also on biology, anthropology, and the like.

As the topic is so important, Plotinus dedicates several treatises to it, and returns to the theme repeatedly in all his writings.[124] In what follows, I present the main lines of Plotinus' theory of the soul, especially as they are important for the current treatise.

a) World-soul and individual souls

In several treatises, Plotinus distinguishes between all-soul (*pasa psychê*), that is, Soul insofar as it is the third level after the One and the Intellect, and the world-soul (*psychê tou pantos*), that is, the soul insofar as it is connected to the body of the All.[125] Soul, insofar as it is not connected

123 See especially O'Meara 1993; Gerson 1994 on Plotinus' metaphysical conception; on the Intellect especially Emilsson 2007; on the One Beierwaltes 1985.

124 The main monographs on the topic are Blumenthal 1971a and Caluori 2015.

125 Dillon and Blumenthal 2015, 21–28. See also Blumenthal 1971b; Caluori 2015, 37–68; 112–120; Dufour 2006.

to the body, is the third level of the intelligible realm—sometimes, but not by Plotinus—called the *hypostasis* Soul.[126] It comes from the Intellect and the One, but is distinct from them because it is itself in motion and creates by being in motion (III.4 [15] 1, 1–3). The world-soul has the All as its body, that is, a perfect body that does not oppose its activity and does not bother it or draw it down. Individual souls are connected to individual bodies that require more attention, which can draw the souls down and turn their focus away from the intelligible realm. In IV.3 [27] a vivid comparison depicts the difference between world-soul and individual soul: the one managing a "plant without trouble" while the other becomes "concerned about the maggots in the plant."[127] The individual bodies are cumbersome and divert the soul's attention to their care, whereas the perfect body of the universe leaves the world-soul in peace.[128]

In treatise III.4 [15], Plotinus speaks about the world-soul mainly in Chapter 4 (lines 2–13). Here too, he states that the body of the world-soul is perfect and therefore does not require any turning of the world-soul toward it. Plotinus further distinguishes the world-soul from human souls: it is free from sense-perception since it does not have any organs, nor does it have self-consciousness,

126 See Commentary 1, 1 ("realities").

127 IV.3 [27] 4, 26–33 (Dillon/Blumenthal).

128 See also IV.8 [6] 2.

because it is at rest in itself. It has the lower faculties of sense-perception and the vegetative principle, but they are "present without being present," that is, they are present, but not as a conscious, active center.

b) The principal functions of the Soul

Depending on the context and his systematic interest, Plotinus divides the soul differently. He can distinguish between a higher soul, the rational soul, and a lower soul;[129] he can use the Platonic tripartition, and he can follow Aristotle's basic distinction of three main functions: the vegetative principle found in human beings, animals, and plants; sense-perception, which is shared by human beings and animals; and rational thought, which is particular to human beings.[130] In our treatise, Plotinus uses this last distinction, and he shows a particular interest in the vegetative principle. In Chapter 2, line 4 he enumerates the three functions of sense-perception, rational thought,

129 See below pp. 70–71.

130 See Aristotle, *On the Soul* II, 415a17: *noêtikon*, *aisthetikon*, *threptikon*. In other passages Aristotle lists more functions: 413b12–13 (*threptikon*, *aisthêtikon*, *dianoêtikon*, *kinêsis*); 414a 31–32 (*threptikon*, *aisthêtikon*, *kinêtikon kata topon*, *dianoêtikon*); in 414b19 he lists *nous* in addition to the *dianôetikon*. On Plotinus' use of Aristotle's psychology, see Blumenthal 1976. Caluori 2005 argues against Blumenthal that these functions are not "essential functions" of the Plotinian soul.

and vegetative principle. What a certain living being is depends, he writes, on which part of the soul is dominant. If the dominant part is rational, the being is a human being, even though the lower levels of soul are present as well (2, 4–11). The faculty of sense-perception[131] does not play an important role in this treatise, nor does Plotinus talk much about rational thought, nor about related faculties he discusses elsewhere, that is, intellect,[132] imagination and memory,[133] consciousness,[134] passions and emotions,[135] or individuality.[136]

In this treatise, Plotinus focuses on the vegetative principle. It is the dominant principle in plants (since it is the only one present, 1, 4–5), while it is present, but not ruling, in other living beings (1, 3–4). The vegetative principle is the lowest principle of the soul, and Plotinus sometimes presents it as an image, a trace or a shadow of the soul (either the higher world-soul or the individual

131 Emilsson 1988.

132 Emilsson 2007; Szlezák 1979.

133 Warren 1965; Warren 1966; Blumenthal 1971a, 80–99; Blumenthal 1976; Dillon 1990; Rizzerio 2003; Gritti 2005; Stock 2014 .

134 See Schwyzer 1960; Warren 1964; Hadot 1980; Smith 1978; Horn 2000; Horn 2003; Schibli 1989; Schroeder 1987; Stern-Gillet 2006.

135 Caluori 2008.

136 Rist 1963a; Blumenthal 1971a, 112–132; Armstrong 1979b; Morel 1999; Petit 1999; Tornau 2009; Tornau 2010.

human soul).[137] The distinction between soul and the image of the soul shows that the vegetative soul is still soul, but nonetheless on a lower level than soul itself. It is the last of the above, as Plotinus calls it in our treatise (1, 16–17), and it is present in the sensible world, in bodies, and in matter.[138] Thereby, Plotinus underlines that the whole cosmos is connected by soul that reaches from the intelligible realm down to matter; soul is present on all these levels, in different ways and different functions, but soul connects the different levels and parts.

c) The generation of matter

Since souls belong to the intelligible realm, their descent into the physical world is problematic, in Plotinus as in Plato.[139] On the one hand, the descent seems to be a fall and the body is regarded as the prison (especially in Plato's *Phaedo*; for the fall of the soul, see also the *Phaedrus*). On the other hand, the cosmos is perfect because it is ensouled, and the descent of the soul is therefore more like a coming forth (see especially Plato's *Timaeus*). Plotinus tries to reconcile the two depictions of the descent of the

137 See Caluori 2015, 186–192; Dillon 2013; Stock 2016b; Tornau 2016.

138 On soul and the generation of matter see below pp. 63–66.

139 See for instance O'Brien 1977; Schuhl 1973; Schuhl 1976.

soul he finds in Plato, especially in treatise IV.8 [6].[140] Soul is an "amphibian" being that has to live in the intelligible and the sensible realm.[141] The descent of the soul is not a fall, writes Plotinus, especially against the Gnostics and their conception of the fall of the soul.[142]

But even though he opposes the Gnostics, the topics of evil and of matter remain problematic in Plotinus. If everything stems from the One and the Good, and if the descent of the soul contributes to the perfection of the universe, how can there be evil? And, does matter derive from the One, or is it so far removed that it is independent of the One? The topic of evil is not central to our treatise,[143] but one important passage treats matter and the body. In Chapter 1, Plotinus speaks about the product of the vegetative soul and he describes it as "altogether different" and "lifeless" (1, 6–7), but he does not name it—which raises the question of whether he is referring to matter or the body.

There is a fierce controversy in the secondary literature about matter and the generation of matter in the *Enneads*. One group of scholars supports the idea

140 See D'Ancona 2003; Stock 2016a.

141 See IV.8 [6] 4, 31–35 and Schniewind 2005.

142 See especially treatise II.9 [33] and Jonas 1971; Puech 1960; Tardieu 1992; Katz 1954; Alt 1990; Borodai 2003; Dillon 1980; Narbonne 2011.

143 See especially treatise I.8 [51] and Rist 1961; O'Brien 1971; O'Brien 1981; Narbonne 2011, 79–95 (Study 3); Laurent 1999a, 23–52 (Chapter I).

that Plotinus does not speak about the generation of *matter* in the current and in similar passages, but about the generation of the body; they assume that matter is ungenerated.[144] Other scholars support the thesis that there is a generation of matter in the *Enneads*.[145] This is

144 Schwyzer, for instance, assumes that Plotinus does not speak about the generation of matter but of the body in III.9 [13] 3, 7–16 (Schwyzer 1973, 276), one of the very passages O'Brien uses as proof for the generation of matter (Schwyzer does not discuss the present passage). Narbonne assumes that the idea of a generation of matter by the soul is a false interpretation that had its origin in some remarks by Ficino (Narbonne 2011, 11–53 [and especially 41–42 on Ficino]). He thinks that it is strange that Plotinus would not use the term *hulê* in III.4, 1 if he is indeed speaking of the generation of matter, since he does not hesitate to use this term in general (Narbonne 1987, 6–7; Narbonne 1993, 150–151; see also Narbonne 1987 who responds to Corrigan 1986 and there is a further response by Corrigan 1988; and see Narbonne 1997).
See Narbonne 1987, 3–4n2 for a list of those who reject the idea of a generation of matter (Müller, Volkmann, Bréhier, Faggin, MacKenna, and Bury).

145 Ficino 2003, 271 assumes that matter is generated. O'Brien argues that matter is not an independent principle, but issues somehow from the soul (O'Brien 1971; O'Brien 1981, 121n19 (on III.4); O'Brien 1988; O'Brien 1990, 182–191; O'Brien 1991, especially 16–18 on our treatise; O'Brien 1999). Corrigan assumes that "Plotinus has more than one view of the generation of matter"; regarding our present treatise he states that the passage in III.4, 1 offers "*conclusive proof*" for the generation of matter (Corrigan 1986, 167–168; see also Corrigan 1988, 18–19; Corrigan 1996, 258–259).
See Narbonne 1987, 3–4n2 for a list of those in favor of a generation of matter by the soul (Ficino, Schroeder, Harder, Beutler, Theiler, and B. S. Page).

not the place to discuss all the pertinent passages, but I agree with Kalligas who writes that "O'Brien's basic thesis" regarding matter as generated has "a solid grounding in the first chapter of treatise III.4."[146]

The choice of words ("complete indefiniteness") and the fact that there seem to be two stages, that is, first the generation of matter (lines 5–12) and then that of the body (lines 14–17), suggests that Plotinus is speaking of matter even though he does not use the term. The choice of several terms supports this interpretation, since Plotinus uses them in similar contexts in other writings, including treatise II.4 [12] *On Matter*, one of the treatises preceding III.4 [15]; Plotinus seems to have this discussion in mind when writing III.4 [15].[147]

d) Immortality and reincarnation

Plotinus follows Plato in assuming that human souls are immortal and will be reincarnated in different forms, according to their current life.[148] Plotinus speaks about

146 Kalligas 2014, 240 (I.8.14.51–54); see also 489 (III.4.1.5–12); and Gerson et al. 2017, 284n4; Guyot 2003, 336–337; 351n6 and 11; Radice 2003, 590n3; Igal 1985, 103n3; Igal 1982, 62–71.

147 See Commentary 1, 6–7; 1, 8; 1, 9; 1, 15.

148 On the discussion about reincarnation in animals in Plato and Plotinus, see also Commentary 2, 16–30.

reincarnation many times in the *Enneads*.[149] He refers, of course, to Platonic passages in the *Phaedo* (81d6–82c8), the *Republic* (X 620a1–d5), and the *Timaeus* (91d5–92c3; see also 42b3–d2) where Plato gives similar lists of reincarnations and, to a lesser degree, to the *Phaedrus* (248c2–249b6).[150] Plato says, as Plotinus does here, that every soul goes into the kind of animal that matches its behavior (*Phaedo* 82a6–7). Plato, however, never mentions reincarnation into plants.[151] Another difference between the Platonic myth and the Plotinian version is that, in the myth in Plato's *Republic* (X 620a1–d5) transformation into animals can be a good and valiant choice (Orpheus who chooses the life of a swan, Thamyras the life of a nightingale, and so on). In Plotinus, there are better and worse animals, and the transformation into a bee, an eagle, or a musical animal is given to souls that showed a certain virtue, but it is nonetheless still a descent from human existence. In the same passage in the *Republic*, Plato also mentions animals choosing the life of human beings, and this transformation is not mentioned in Plotinus' text at all.

149 On the reincarnation of souls in Plotinus see also I.1 [53] 11, 8–15; VI.7 [38] 6, 21–27 and, with further passages and references, Kalligas 2014, 127–128 (I.1.11.8–15) and Marzolo 2006, 168–170.

150 Kalligas 2014, 491 (III.4.2.16–30) also refers to *Korê Kosmou* 42 as a possible background.

151 See Commentary 2, 21–24.

Should one take the lists of reincarnations literally, either in Plato or in Plotinus? A fragment of Aristotle's *Protrepticus* speaks about human beings becoming like a plant or an animal, depending on whether they lose both sense-perception and intellect or just the intellect (Fragment 28); here, the meaning is clearly moral. Some scholars assume that this is the case for Plato or Plotinus as well.[152] Others, however, assume that the doctrine has to be taken literally.[153] In my view, Plotinus' whole theory

152 Dixsaut assumes that, in Plato, the meaning is moral (Dixsaut 1991, 355–356n176; see also Laurent 1999b, 119–122). Guyot points out that Plato only speaks of transmigration into animals in the context of the myths (Guyot 2003, 355n29). Rich writes that Plotinus took the theory of reincarnation in general seriously, but that reincarnation into animals remains problematic (Rich 1957, 235), and further that neither Porphyry nor Iamblichus supported this doctrine, and that Proclus counted Plotinus among those who gave the theory of transmigration of souls into animals a purely moral sense (Rich 1957, 236; quoting Proclus, *On the Republic* II, 309–10; Kroll. On Porphyry see also Guyot 2003, 354n24). Kalligas writes: "Nevertheless, the playfulness running through the whole passage—something quite unusual for P.—suggests that the reader is perhaps not meant to take literally the entire sequence of details. The basic content of the doctrine is ethical rather than metaphysical: one's mode of life forms one's character." (Kalligas 2014, 491 [III.4.2.16–30]; but see also note below).

153 Annas writes that the "treatment" of the topic of reincarnation sounds "ironical," but that it is an important part of Plato's conception of the relation between body and soul (Annas 1982, 127). Dörrie assumes that Plato thought that souls would be reincarnated in the form that was concordant with their ethos, that Plotinus also followed this idea, but not Porphyry and Iamblichus (Dörrie 1957, pass. [on Plotinus especially 419–420]). Augustine thought that Plotinus, as opposed to

suggests that he took the idea of reincarnation into animals seriously. In I.1 [53], for instance, he writes:

"If as it is said there are sinful human souls in them, the separable part of the soul does not come to belong to the beasts but is there without being there for them; their consciousness includes the image of the soul and the body; a beast is then a qualified body made, as we may say, by an image of the soul. But if a human soul has not entered the beast, it becomes a living being of such and such a kind by an illumination from the world soul" (I.1 [53] 11, 8–15).

The distinction between animals that are mere animals and animals that are, in fact, human does not seem to have an ethical sense here, but seems to be a literal statement. However, Plotinus never addresses the tricky aspects of this doctrine, especially the question of how a soul could come back from being an animal. Plato writes

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Porphyry, believed in reincarnation into animals (Augustine, *The City of God* X, 30). Rich assumes that the passage in III.4 is not conclusive and could be meant to be understood literally or morally, but that other passages in Plotinus lead us to believe that the literal meaning is correct (Rich 1957, 236–238. See also Laurent 1999b, 126–133 with reference to further passages in Plotinus, and Armstrong 1966–1988, III, 146–147n1). Cole also assumes that Plotinus took the reincarnation into animals seriously (Cole 1992, 75. Stamatellos 2013, 62 assumes that reincarnation concerns only the lower, but not the higher soul). Kalligas writes: "Hence, as Rich 1957, 235–38, has also argued, P.'s assertions concerning re-embodiment cannot be regarded as mere metaphors" (Kalligas 2014, 491 [III.4.2.16–30]; but see also note above).

in the myth in the *Republic* that some musical animals choose to be human in the next life. But Plotinus transfers the mythical choice into an ongoing decision of the soul in this life here.[154] So how could an animal live in a way that would prepare its reincarnation as a human being? According to the theory presented here, it would have to activate the rational part in this life here in order to be human in the next life. But the rational faculty is not active in animals.

The fact that Plotinus does not discuss all the difficult aspects of such a doctrine means, in my view, that his main interest in the theory of reincarnation is ethical. It is supposed to be an admonition and a warning for human beings to live a virtuous life and ascend instead of falling.

e) The soul as an intelligible cosmos

Plotinus does not only make use of the Aristotelian partition of the soul.[155] Very often, he distinguishes between a lower soul and a higher, or between a lower, a middle soul, and a higher soul that remains in intellection.[156] The middle soul is the rational soul and the center of human activity, while the lower soul encompasses the lower

154 See Commentary 5, 1–4.

155 See above p. 61.

156 See Blumenthal 1971a, 100–111 and Dillon and Blumenthal 2015, 29n3.

faculties of the soul, that is, sense-perception, emotions, and the vegetative functions. The higher soul transcends the center of human activity and reaches up into the realm of the intellect. This level is unconscious to most human beings, but nonetheless is in principle available to every soul. Plotinus therefore also speaks of the undescended part of the soul, the presence of the One and the Intellect in every human soul and of the intelligible universe in our souls.

In IV.8 [6], Plotinus defends his famous thesis that our soul does not descend completely.[157] There is one part of the soul that remains above, in the intelligible realm, that does not lose the connection to its origin and allows the soul to ascend through its own powers. Most human beings are unaware of this higher level of their soul, but it is present in every soul and can be activated if the soul turns its consciousness upward toward the Intellect. In V.1 [10], Plotinus writes that the One, the Intellect, and the Soul are present in ourselves.[158] The One and the Intellect are not only present in the intelligible universe, but also in every soul that is or contains an "intelligible universe," since the individual souls and the world-soul are

157 IV.8 [6] 8, 1–3. See also IV.8 [6] 8, 14 and Chiaradonna 2005; Hadot 1980, 246; Szlezák 2000; Rist 1967.

158 V.1 [10] 10, 5–6.

"sisters," as Plotinus puts it.[159] The idea of the similarity of the world-soul and the individual souls stems from Plato's *Timaeus* where human souls are formed from the same ingredients as the world-soul, although in lesser purity (41d4–7); and human souls are encouraged to imitate the form of the All and assimilate themselves to the world-soul (88c7–d1; 90c6–d7). Plotinus develops this Platonic idea of the similarity of our soul to the world-soul into the idea that we are or contain an "intelligible universe," a *kosmos noêtos,* as Plotinus writes in our treatise (3, 22; 6, 22–23). The idea of a *kosmos noêtos* can already be found in Numenius (see *Fragment* 41). Later Neoplatonists, however, criticized Plotinus for this idea; they did not believe that a part of the soul remained in the intelligible realm or that the One and the Intellect could be present in the human soul. On the contrary, they emphasized the gap between the human soul and the intelligible realm, which also meant that the human soul could not ascend by means of its own powers, but needed theurgical help.[160]

159 IV.3 [27] 6, 13 and II.9 [33] 18, 16. On this image see Helleman-Elgersma 1980, especially 57–63.

160 Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* 134A (V, p. 948, 14–20; ed. Cousin 1864). See also Armstrong 1966–1988, III, 150–151n1; Henry 1938, 220–221; Guyot 2003, 357–358n47; Dillon 2005.

f) Souls and stars

In the present treatise Plotinus asserts that there is in human souls both a *kosmos noêtos* and a "disposition of the same kind as the world-soul" (6, 22–23). Since Plotinus emphasizes the difference between the *kosmos noêtos* and the other parts, one might think that he wants to refer to lower parts of the soul, but this is not the case. He is not referring to the world-soul that animates the sensible cosmos (here on earth), the lower soul he sometimes calls nature, *phusis*.[161] Rather, in this passage Plotinus refers to the world-soul that permeates the heavens, the firmament, the planets and the stars.

Plotinus assumes that the stars are ensouled and divine.[162] In III.4 [15], he states that different powers come from different parts of this soul to human beings[163] and that good souls will go to the star or planet from which their activity came. The souls he is speaking about (2, 18–30) are those that lived a better life and traveled to the higher realm without altogether leaving the visible world.

161 III.6 [26] 4, 21–22. See Dillon 2013, 77.

162 On the stars see especially II.3 [52] and Adamson 2008; Dillon 2003.

163 See also II.3 [52] 12, where Plotinus reflects on the influence of stars: the stars do not make a human being or a horse, but influence how they come out.

Thus, soul chooses the influence of the stars by choosing a certain life;[164] "the soul, in choosing its mode of life, places itself in the charge of a certain type of Guardian Spirit, who is in turn connected with a particular stellar region—and this consequently rules, to some degree, the fate of the particular soul, without, however, actually imposing this fate upon it."[165]

The idea of souls that go to stars, and that are connected to stars, may seem strange.[166] However, it is a consequence of the similarity between the individual soul and the world-soul in all its dimensions. Since the world-soul permeates heaven and is present in it with its different powers, the individual souls, in whom these powers exist as well, are connected to the respective parts of the realm of heaven. A human being will connect itself to a certain region of heaven by activating the matching faculties in his or her soul.

The souls that go to the stars and the heavens differ in disposition and character, but these differences do not entail a hierarchy. There is a variety of higher lives, better than the "normal" human life, but lower than the intellect. Plotinus was probably influenced by Plato's *Phaedrus*,

164 Adamson 2008, 286

165 Kalligas 2014, 499 (III.4.6.18–30).

166 See Kalligas 2014, 499 (III.4.6.18–30): "the present author appears unwilling to venture into this type of astrological speculation."

where souls follow different gods, according to their own character (246e4–247a4; 250b7–8).

g) A paradox?

Blumenthal speaks of a "paradox" that "Plotinus' soul was, like Plato's, separate from and, ideally, opposed to the body, but worked like Aristotle's, which was by definition the body's essence."[167] Soul is a metaphysical principle; it permeates the whole universe, the heavens and stars, but also, in its vegetative form, the sensible world. Furthermore, soul is the individual human soul, that is, the ethical instance in human beings and the center of knowledge and consciousness, and which will be reincarnated according to its previous life. It seems, at times, difficult to reconcile these aspects; and one is tempted to say that Plotinus asks too much of this one concept. However, our treatise shows that the different aspects of the theory of the soul are intricately linked in Plotinus' thought. He does not discuss all aspects of his theory of the soul in III.4 [15], but he certainly presents the soul as a metaphysical, anthropological, biological, ethical, and epistemological principle; his analysis shows how important the connections between the world-soul and human souls are. There is

167 Blumenthal 1976, 42. On the combination of Aristotelian and Platonic elements see also Blumenthal 1971a, 134–140.

an intelligible universe in us, that is, the One, the Intellect, and the Soul, but also a disposition similar to the higher world-soul, that is, connections to powers or functions in the realm of heaven. Thus, we are connected to the stars, because they are ensouled just as we are, and there are connections between the different kinds or forms of soul. Through the vegetative soul, we are connected to all that is alive, including plants. Through sense-perception, we are linked to animals. Rational thought is specifically human. We are capable of intellection and thereby able to reach the level of the Intellect, and we can be united to the One. Furthermore, we are linked to the stars. The stars are inferior to the intelligible realm, yet higher than the human realm. Plotinus calls their realm "daimonic" when he says that the souls that leave the visible realm altogether transcend the "daimonic" realm (6, 31).

2. The account of the *daimôn* in III.4 [15]

In III.4 [15] Plotinus uses the word *daimôn* in two different senses: a *daimôn* that one can *become* and a *daimôn* that one *has*.[168] A human being can become a *daimôn* in a future life if he or she lives in a sufficiently meritorious fashion (III.4 [15] 3, 1–3). In this case, as in Plato's *Symposium*, the *daimôn* is a being higher than a human.

168 See Kalligas 2014, 497 (III.4.6.1–4).

In Chapter 2 Plotinus explains that human beings will be reincarnated in a being that corresponds to their current form of life.[169] If the lower faculties of the soul dominate, the reincarnation will bring the soul to an animal or even a plant; if reason rules, the soul will return as a human being; and someone who is in this life a sage will become next a *daimôn* or even a god (III.4 [15], 2, 12–3, 3).

But the *daimôn* that a person can become is not the same as the *daimôn* that the person has; and in the remainder of the text Plotinus is chiefly interested in the latter. Plotinus introduces this part of the text by asking whether this *daimôn*, that is, the *daimôn* someone can become, is the *daimôn* to whom we were allotted, that is, the *daimôn* mentioned in Plato's *Phaedo* as the guide of the soul to judgment (107d5–7). In Plotinus, however, this *daimôn* to whom we are allotted is not described as a guardian spirit of the soul as in the *Phaedo*, but defined as the inactive level just beyond the level of the life we choose. This means that, should we live on the level of sense-perception, the *daimôn* is the rational part of the soul. If we live on the level of the rational, it is what is beyond (III.4 [15] 3, 4–8), in other words, the intellect. This definition eliminates any tension with the passage in Plato's *Republic* where souls are told that no *daimôn* will receive them by lot, but that they have to choose a *daimôn* (*Republic* X 617e1–2). Since

169 On reincarnation in Plotinus see above pp. 66–70.

the *daimôn* is the inactive level beyond the active level, we choose the *daimôn* by choosing a form of life (III.4 [15] 3, 8–10). Plato's emphasis on the choice of the *daimôn* seems to verge on an idea of an impersonal fate, but a little later in the text this *daimôn* is set as the "overseer" of the soul's choice of life (*Republic* X 620d8–e1). This suggests that the *daimôn* is indeed conceived of as some kind of tutelary spirit. Plotinus' transformation could be understood then as a diminution of Platonic mythology: fate and tutelary divinity are replaced with the workings of the mind. The *daimôn* is almost rationalized into a symbol for the soul's choice of life: by choosing a life we also choose the level beyond the level we live on, and that is called the *daimôn*. Yet it is more than a mere symbol, since it has a certain influence on the human being or the soul. According to Plotinus, there can be unconscious parts of the soul or the self that are nonetheless influential. He distinguishes the conscious center from other levels of the soul, higher and lower, which are there, but not (always) present to consciousness.[170] Hence, the *daimôn* is seen as a part of the soul that has or can gain a certain influence without being the main active level on which we live. The *daimôn*

170 See especially Smith 1978 and Warren 1964 on the topic of the unconscious, but also articles on the topics of memory or *phantasia*: Blumenthal 1976; Dillon 1986; Dillon 1990; Rizzerio 2003; Schibli 1989; Stock 2014; Warren 1965; Warren 1966.

should be, as Adamson writes, understood "in *functional* terms"[171] and is not a tutelary spirit.

This definition of the *daimôn* combines the formula of the *daimôn* to whom we are allotted in the *Phaedo* (107d6–7) with the idea of the choice of the *daimôn* in the *Republic*, and it diverges considerably from the understanding expressed in the Platonic sources. Plotinus' new definition, driven by his intention to derive a unified theory from Plato, immediately raises other questions, since it is not clear how it can be made consonant with other Platonic passages in the *Phaedo*, the *Republic*, and the *Timaeus*.

The first question Plotinus asks stems from the *Phaedo*. He wants to know why this *daimôn* "leads" (III.4 [15] 3, 10), since Plato explains in the *Phaedo* that the soul is led to judgment after the separation from the body (107d5–108b3). Obviously, it is not clear how the *daimôn* as it was just defined could serve as such a guide, for it seems to be nothing more than a part of the soul. Plotinus presents an elliptical answer (3, 10–21) in which it is not always clear whether he is referring to the person or the *daimôn,* and in which he even mentions the strange concept of a *daimôn* of a *daimôn*. This last idea loses its surface strangeness when we recall that the *daimôn* is merely the inactive level beyond the active level

171 Adamson 2017, 264.

of the soul. If the soul lifts itself up, then there is a new active level (the former *daimôn*) and a new *daimôn*. Such an ascent is desirable: the soul would then make its way from *daimôn* to *daimôn* to the higher world. However, a descent is equally possible, and Plotinus describes this as being "weighed" down.

The second issue Plotinus raises (in Chapter 5) responds to Plato's *Republic* (X 617d2–621a1). He says that if "the soul makes the choice of its *daimôn*" in the world beyond, it is not clear how "we" could still "have power over anything" in this world. Plotinus describes the Platonic story of the choice, in the afterlife, of the new life of the soul as a riddling statement for the general will and choice of the soul. This is not a choice made in the world beyond, in between incarnations, but a general will of the soul, in this embodied life. Plotinus downplays the mythological element, or rather, interprets in psychological terms what had been Plato's didactic fantasy about the next life or the influence of this life on the next (5, 1–4). Adamson writes that "one might […] be tempted to say that a 'mythic' understanding of the *daimon* is being eliminated in favour of a more rationalist approach."[172] The Platonic myth, however, leads to a second issue. According to the myth the soul chooses its new life before embodiment. This would acquit the body from the implicit charge of

172 Adamson 2017, 271.

being the source of evil for the soul (5, 4–9). The soul's choice and not the body determines a person's way of life. In other treatises, Plotinus says otherwise,[173] but here he underlines only the soul's responsibility. Plotinus then asks what happens if a good person gets a bad body or a bad person a good body. He answers that every soul can procure for itself the appropriate body. This answer sounds strange, since we seem to know many counter-examples. But for Plotinus the appropriate body for the sage is not the healthy body of an athlete. It does not matter what happens to the sage since his happiness only depends on the status of his soul.[174] The purpose of this statement is merely to clarify the soul's responsibility for its own life: the souls "arrange what is given according to their own character" (5, 18–19).

Plato's remarks about the *daimôn* in the *Timaeus* (90a2–d7) present a third challenge to Plotinus' integrating impulse. Plato's statements suggest that he is speaking about the highest form of the soul, that is, the *nous*. This seems irreconcilable with Plotinus' aforementioned theory, since *nous* can only be the *daimôn* if the rational part is the active level. But Plotinus directs his focus to one central element, namely the question of whether the *daimôn* is internal or external. He writes that the *daimôn*

173 See especially I.8 [51]. On the topic see O'Brien 1971; O'Brien 1993; Rist 1961; Schäfer 2002.

174 See especially I.4 [46].

is "ours" if we understand "us" as souls, but "not ours" if "we" are the living being (5, 19–24). The *daimôn* as the inactive level above the level we live on is of course part of the soul; it is "ours" and not "we," as it is not the center of consciousness, but it still belongs to "us." Thus, if "we" is understood as the soul, the *daimôn* is "ours." If "we" is understood as the whole living being, however, Plotinus writes that the *daimôn* is beyond the "we" and therefore "not ours." The contradiction is resolved since "we" as the living being consists of the lower soul or the image of the soul and body,[175] which therefore also excludes higher parts of the soul, so leaving the *daimôn* beyond us.[176]

The last issue presented in Chapter 5 springs from Plato's *Republic,* where the *daimôn* is presented as the "overseer" of the soul's choice (X 620d8–e1). It is clearly not easy to explain how an "inactive" part of the soul can act as an "overseer" or "fulfiller." Even though the *daimôn* itself does not act (rather, the active part of the soul acts), the *daimôn* is said by Plotinus to neither "allow [the soul] to descend much further to what is bad" nor to reach a higher level or the same level as the *daimôn*. Plotinus limits the range of agency that a soul has. Since someone will become a *daimôn* who already is a *daimôn* and someone will become an animal or a plant who (basically) already

175 For references see Commentary 5, 19–24.

176 For Plotinus' thoughts on the *hêmeis* see especially treatise I.1 [53]. See also the secondary literature mentioned in note 188.

acts like one (since he lives on this level of the soul), both ascent and descent are possible. However, there are limits, and no radical changes are admitted.

In the last chapter of the treatise Plotinus raises further questions regarding the *daimôn*. He states that the *daimôn* of a sage is a god, since the sage is on the level of the *daimôn* or even a *daimôn* (6, 1–5). This sage becomes a *daimôn* in the first sense mentioned above, the sense of the *Symposium* (202d11–e4). The idea of a god as the sage's *daimôn*—*daimôn* in the second sense—is in accordance with the theory of the *daimôn* presented before.[177] Furthermore, Plotinus comes back to the cases of souls sinking down to the level of an animal on the one hand, and those ascending to a higher world on the other. In the first case, Plotinus writes briskly that the *daimôn* of a soul that descends into a wild beast is a "base or simpleminded *daimôn*" (6, 17–18: *ponêros ge ê euêthês*). Many authors before and after Plotinus assume the existence of bad *daimones*; in the Christian world *daimones* will be bad per se, but the idea of a "simpleminded" *daimôn* seems to be unique. In the context of Plotinus' theory, it makes perfect sense: since the active level in such a soul is very low, the inactive level beyond it, the *daimôn*, will still be low, and therefore bad or simpleminded (*ponêros* implies that it is low, cheap, poor—the word often has a

177 On the first and second sense see also Kalligas 2014, 497 (III.4).

social sense; and *euêthês* that it is simple, sub-rational—"vile and simple" would be the old-fashioned [prejudicial] English terms).[178]

With the case of the good souls that go into a higher world, Plotinus maps psychology onto cosmology. Souls either end up on the sun, another planet, or the firmament, or they transcend the visible realm altogether. The best will transcend *daimonic* nature completely. The good but not perfect will go to the planet that is connected to the power that was active in them, and this star will be their *daimôn* (6, 18–33) for "something corresponding to the soul's Guardian Spirit will also be present in the arrangement of the universe."[179] Thus, even though the idea of a star as a *daimôn* sounds like some sort of astrological determinism, this *daimôn* is not a tutelary spirit, but the inactive level beyond the active level of the soul.

Plotinus defines the *daimôn* of the *Phaedo* as the inactive level of the soul above the active level. This definition can easily be combined with the idea of the choice of the *daimôn* in the *Republic* and the definition of the *daimôn* as something internal from the *Timaeus*. Plotinus does not present "an account of spirit-guides,"[180] nor does he posit the existence of a "tutelary spirit." The *daimôn* has to be

178 See Commentary 6, 17–18.

179 Kalligas 2014, 499 (III.4).

180 Rist 1963b, 13–14; see also 23 where he speaks about Plotinus "and his guide" and 24 where he speaks of "his theories of spirit-guides."

interpreted in "*functional* terms."[181] Plotinus' theory is not a demonology, not a theory of guiding spirits, but a radical theory of the mind. Furthermore, it is an intensive reflection on the topics of freedom, responsibility, and determinism.

3. Responsibility and determinism

Plotinus' theory of the *daimôn* in III.4 underlines the responsibility of the soul or the human being for his own life. With no one or nothing else to blame, neither person, nor body, nor circumstances, the soul alone is responsible for its course of life. Misfortune, poverty, a sick body should not be a hindrance, but have to be adapted as much as possible to the soul's resolution.

However, the freedom of choice a soul has is not absolute. It is bound by choices the soul made in previous lives. Thus, the range of choices that are possible in this life depends on the previous life and the choices the soul made there.

This theory is, in great measure, a consequence of the combination of Plotinus' philosophical scope with his interpretation of Plato. He states on the one hand that the

181 See Adamson 2017, 264. See also Timotin 2012, 295: "la notion de *daimôn* ne désigne plus une réalité spécifique, mais un rapport de subordination, elle est une notion relative, sans contenu préétabli."

previous life determines the next life and that the *daimôn* does not change during life, but, on the other hand, he transfers the mythical choice of a new life into this life and gives the soul responsibility and freedom in the present world. The first of these two formulations supposes that the *daimôn* is fixed and the life determined as a result of the previous life—this is the suggestion in the myth of Er in the *Republic*. The latter statement, however, suggests that the soul can change its course, which is clearly what Plotinus wants to stress. He attempts to find a solution for the disagreements or conflicting consequences of the Platonic passages with a severe limitation of the other-worldly and even extra-psychic actions or processes. One consequence of this pruning is that change of types of life and change within this life need additional explanation. If the *daimôn* does not change during one life and if it is the level immediately above the active level, no change seems to be possible. However, this is not what Plotinus wants to argue. He clearly thinks that ascents and descents are possible. Further, he takes as an empirical reality that someone can live on a lower or a higher level than the one they should be on, and that they will be reincarnated accordingly. The previous life constrains the range of movement up and down the ladder of types of life and hence of reincarnation. Someone who lived a meritorious life and could be a sage will not suddenly live in so base

a way that he will be a beast; it does not seem possible to skip a rung up or down the psychic ladder.

Rather, every soul has to accept the life, the circumstances, and the body as given material with which it can work to fulfill its purpose. Difficult circumstances, such as a bad body, are not merely punishment for faults committed in a previous life that have to be accepted as fated. They may be a punishment, but equally they could help the soul to develop its own resolution. The soul has, of course, to accept what it cannot change, but it is challenged to improve what it can.[182] The external circumstances are, however, relevant insofar as the soul allows them to gain influence. The soul of the sage will be impervious to the circumstances or will make the best of them, whatever they are.

The *daimôn* does not "limit either the freedom or the responsibility of the individual"[183]; it is not in any way actively engaged;[184] it remains inactive unless "we"

182 See Adamson 2017, 274: "My soul's degree of success or failure therefore depends on the interaction of three factors: choices I made in my previous life, external circumstances in this life, and choices I am making now in this life."

183 Kalligas 2014, 496 (III.4.6.1–4).

184 *Contra* Kalligas 2014, 496 (III.4.6.1–4): who understands the *daimôn* to be overseeing "our activities, cross-examining, suggesting, or dissuading, but always leaving the final decision to us." See also Kalligas 2014, 491–492 (III.4.3.4–8): "silent approbation"; but "one might feel certain compunctions."

as the conscious and active center of the soul begin to activate it.[185]

4. Soul, self, and *daimôn*

Plotinus' treatise on the *daimôn* reveals a thinker responding to particular passages and thoughts of Plato with the intent to systematize Platonic demonology into a coherent theory of the soul. The *daimôn* as a constitutive force extraneous to the psyche is simply not philosophically useful for Plotinus. The mythological elements are especially minimized and rationalized so as to develop a model of a responsible and conscious self that decides its own course. He does not support the theory of an external guide of the soul (as in Plato's *Phaedo* and *Republic*). Nor does he interpret the *daimôn* as the *nous* (as in Plato's *Timaeus*). The *daimôn* is internal to the soul (as in the *Timaeus*), but not identical to the intellect. The *daimôn* is part of the soul, but it is not in every human being one and the same part. Individual choice affects which part of the soul is the *daimôn*. In both the *Timaeus* and in the Stoic concept, the *daimôn* had been identified as

185 See Adamson 2017, 272: "As we have seen, for the *daimôn* to become active is for the soul to exercise in its next life the power that was present but idle in this life. This is something we can achieve by activating that idle power, engaging in an activity better than the one distinctive of our incarnation."

the *intellect* or the *hêgêmonikon*, that is, the ruling part of the soul.[186] Plotinus departs from this strong conception of the *daimôn* as the source of activity in the soul (and even from the idea that the *daimôn* should be the active part). For Plotinus, the ruling part of the soul is the conscious center of the soul, which is necessarily different from the *daimôn,* which remains the inactive level above the active part. This means that the *daimôn* is not rationalized and interiorized as in the *Timaeus* or in the Stoic interpretation, where the *daimôn*, as that which is meant to guide us, constitutes the most important part of the soul. In Plotinus, the idea of guidance through the *daimôn* has more or less disappeared. However, Plotinus has not altogether dispensed with the idea of the *daimôn* as guide: certainly, the *daimôn* is not the conscious center of the soul, but it is something that is beyond, and of great importance. It is beyond not in the sense of an external being: but while still within the realm of the soul itself, it is beyond the active center.

186 Kalligas 2014, 491 (III.4.3.1–4): "In all these cases, the activated part of the soul directs the animated being and determines its character. And […] the later Stoics tended to refer to the ruling, rational part of the soul, *the hêgemonikon*, as the 'inner spirit' (*endon daimôn*), something readily identifiable in turn with the personal guiding Genius. Even Dio Chrysostom, 25.1, regards it as a commonplace that this *daimôn* is equivalent to 'that which in each person is dominant and according to which he lives . . . and does whatever he does.'" See also Bréhier 1954, III, 62.

Plotinus' thinking is unified as an effort to interiorize the actions of the soul without recourse, here, to extra-psychic, religious forces. Nonetheless, he does not abandon the "religious" terminology.

"As so often in the *Enneads*, Plotinus takes a popular religious or superstitious belief as his starting-point and transforms it into something quite different in bringing it into line with his own philosophy."[187]

He reworks this traditional idea of the force and position of the divinity within the human soul in a fashion that is frankly neither religious nor secularizing. He does not write in some polemical spirit against popular belief. He is consistently interested in how the human soul functions as a center of consciousness and decision-making (without discounting the non- or supra-conscious, unrealized parts of the self). The terminology of the *daimôn* participates in the debate about the "we" and about what is "ours," terms Plotinus uses to describe the conscious center of the soul (the "I" or "self") and to answer the question what can belong to "us" without being part of this conscious center (for instance, the body, but also higher levels of the soul).[188] The notion of the *daimôn* introduces new issues (especially the importance of the soul as the conscious and

187 Armstrong 1966–1988, I, 33n1.

188 See Aubry 2004; Aubry 2008b; Chiaradonna 2008; Horn 2003; O'Daly 1973; Remes 2007; Smith 1978; Stock forthcoming 2021; Tornau 2009; Tornau 2010; Warren 1964.

responsible agent) and a new perspective: Plotinus uses a concept that stems from the realm of religion so as to acknowledge and investigate that something in our mind that is beyond ourselves, beyond our conscious center of attention. The employment of a term like the *daimôn* seems useful to describe this influential and yet unconscious part of ourselves; it underlines the fact that this part may seem external to our mind and that we cannot trace its effects back to conscious decisions. To attribute these effects to an external cause (an overseeing divinity or the action of a soul or fate in a realm temporally and essentially alien from that of lived experience) seems to have been for Plotinus an insufficient or unsatisfactory explanation. True, Plotinus suggests this explanation, but he does not endorse it. His response is clear: no external force constrains the self, the responsibility is ours.

In later treatises, Plotinus discusses similar questions about the self, self-consciousness, and responsibility without the terminology of the *daimôn*; he mostly uses the terms of the "we" (*hêmeis*) and of "what belongs to us."[189] It is also the case that the terminology of the *daimôn* raises certain problems. Why has he used it?

"Obviously Plotinus' motivation is partially, perhaps even mostly, exegetical. But our possession of a *daimôn*, a better aspect of the soul than we currently use, underwrites

189 See above, note 188.

the optimism that is one of the most characteristic features of Plotinus' Platonism."[190]

The first intention in treatise III.4 [15] is certainly to explain Plato's statements on *daimones* and to bring them together into a coherent theory of mind. The employment of the term of the *daimôn* for this theory is illuminating, but not without difficulties (chief among these: there is a reduction inherent in a system where a *daimôn*'s guidance seems determined by a prior life—what about the life prior to that? There seems to be a weak kind of circularity here, where the role of choice is asserted but not much clarified or explored). Furthermore, the combination of definitions of the *daimôn* as inactive and its role as "leading" and "giving assent" is at best problematic.[191]

These difficulties are, in my view, the main reason Plotinus abandons this terminology in other treatises, especially in I.1 [53] which deals with similar questions. However, the terminology reveals the connection between the topics of the soul and fate, of responsibility, freedom and determination, and of the self and consciousness, in a way both unique in the ancient philosophical tradition and of considerable importance for much later philosophical thinking about the self.

"P. here comes to grips with Platonic demonology by treating some of its traditional themes (which were,

190 Adamson 2017, 274.

191 See Dillon 2001, 6.

moreover, readily susceptible to harmonization with certain widely diffused religious beliefs of the Romans) in an entirely individual and innovative way, demythologizing and internalizing it to a significant extent, and 'translating' it thereby into a pioneering psychological theory."[192]

V. LATE NEOPLATONIC DEMONOLOGY

In the following sketch of late Neoplatonic demonology[193] I describe chiefly those ideas that responded to Plotinus' conception, in great measure to demonstrate the specificity of Plotinus' theory. I will, therefore, first present Porphyry's

192 Kalligas 2014, 482 (III.4). See also 486: "P., while maintaining his distance from the mythological aspects of the whole question, refuses, on the other hand, to interpret the 'allotted spirit' merely as an allegorical expression for the ruling part of the soul, the rational 'I'. His expansive theory of the soul and of its relation to the conscious 'I' […] allows him to interpret it instead as an entity that, although extending beyond the narrow confines of our consciousness, remains nonetheless indissolubly bound with the inner truth and the intrinsic aims that rule us and motivate us and integrate us into an order of things that, however much it may transcend us, is in reality most profoundly our own. His pioneering view that the soul is able to range across a field much broader than the 'I' offers him the possibility of understanding its higher regions as 'not-I,' hence as something superior and demonic. The question concerning the nature of the 'allotted spirit' offers itself to him as an occasion to investigate the complexity and multilayered character of man's inner life, which is revealed thereby as an entire 'intelligible universe.'"

193 See especially Timotin 2012.

account of the conjuration of Plotinus' guardian spirit and his ideas on *daimones*, then briefly present Iamblichus' ideas on *daimones* in general and, in greater detail, his conception of the personal *daimôn*. The last part focuses on Proclus' criticism of Plotinus' theory and Proclus' own demonology. I have not expounded later Neoplatonic ideas of *daimones* as higher divine beings, but concentrated on the later theorists' references to Plotinus and to the personal *daimôn*, since this is more relevant to Plotinus' treatise, which barely treats *daimones* in general.

1. Porphyry

In Chapter 10 of his *Life of Plotinus*, Porphyry relates the incident of the conjuration of Plotinus' *daimôn* in the Temple of Isis in Rome.

"Plotinus certainly possessed by birth something more than other men. An Egyptian priest who came to Rome and made his acquaintance through a friend wanted to give a display of his occult wisdom and asked Plotinus to come and see a visible manifestation of his own companion *daimôn* evoked. Plotinus readily consented, and the evocation took place in the temple of Isis: the Egyptian said it was the only pure spot he could find in Rome. When the *daimôn* was summoned to appear a god came and not a being of the daimonic order, and the Egyptian said, 'Blessed are you, who have a god for your

daimôn and not a companion of the subordinate order.' It was not, however, possible to ask any questions of the god or even to see him present for longer, as the friend who was taking part in the manifestation strangled the birds which he was holding as a protection, either out of jealousy or because he was afraid of something. So the companion of Plotinus was a *daimôn* of the more god-like kind, and he continually kept the divine eye of his soul fixed on this companion. It was a reason of this kind that led him to write the treatise 'On the *Daimôn* that Received us as a Lot,' in which he sets out to explain the differences between daimonic companions."[194]

Treatise III.4 [15] was written well before Porphyry's arrival in Rome,[195] so Porphyry only knows of this episode by hearsay; he was not present himself.[196] It is one of the episodes that prompt scholars to discuss Plotinus' involvement with magic.[197] Plotinus' own writings certainly make it clear that the union with the Divine is not to be achieved through theurgical practices as in later Neoplatonism, but through the ascent of the soul alone. The theory of the *daimôn* shows as well that Plotinus does

194 Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, 10, 14–33. See for instance Armstrong 1955; Rist 1963b.

195 Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, 4, 12–13.

196 See Armstrong 1966–1988, I, 32–33n1; Brisson 1992, 468; Dodds 1951, 289; Guyot 2003, 335.

197 See for instance Armstrong 1955; Brisson 1992; Helleman 2010; Merlan 1953.

not follow the popularly held belief in guardian spirits. The theory of the guardian spirit suggested by Porphyry's story diverges considerably from Plotinus' own theory exposed in the treatise. According to Plotinus' theory, the *daimôn* of the sage is a god, that is, either some higher entity or even the One itself, since the sage lives on the level of the intellect, and this god would never appear in a temple in Rome through some theurgic ritual.[198] And even if it were a god of a lower level, it is not, according to Plotinus, an external entity that could appear, but it is part of the soul. Porphyry's divergent and traditional understanding of the *daimôn* no doubt vaunts the authority of his master and entices the potential reader to take up Plotinus, but it certainly also betrays his master's argumentation.

A passage in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*—in Abamon's answer to Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo*—suggests, however, that Porphyry's thoughts on the guardian-*daimôn* might have been closer to his master's than the passage in the *Life of Plotinus* makes us believe. Iamblichus writes to Porphyry:

"You slide off into philosophy, and in the process subvert the whole basis of the doctrine of the personal daemon. For if (the daemon) is merely a part of the soul, as for instance the intellectual part, and that person is 'happy' (*eudaimôn*) who has his intellect in a sound state,

198 Guyot 2003, 335–336. On the sage's *daimôn* see also Commentary 6, 1–4; 3–4.

there will no longer be any need to postulate any other order, greater or daemonic, to preside over the human order as its superior."[199]

According to Iamblichus, theurgy is ranked higher than philosophy; the human soul needs divine help to ascend. To assume that the soul does not descend completely, as Plotinus does,[200] seems unacceptable to the later Neoplatonists. There has to be something higher than the human soul. Therefore, Iamblichus believes that the *daimôn* should not be conceived of as a "part of the soul,"[201] for instance, the intellect. He thinks that it is not adequate to assume that someone is simply "'happy' who has his intellect in a sound state."[202] This brief description lets us believe that Porphyry must have supported such views in his *Letter to Anebo*.[203] This could suggest that Porphyry may have been closer to Plato's *Timaeus* and to the later Stoics than to Plotinus' more sophisticated and complicated view.

If the last words of Plotinus, as reported by Porphyry, allude to the *daimôn*, this suggests as well that Porphyry

199 Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* IX, 8 (282, 5–9).

200 See above pp. 70–72.

201 On Proclus' critique of Plotinus see above p. 72.

202 The association of *daimôn* and *eudaimonia*, attributed to Porphyry by Iamblichus, can be found, for instance, in Democritus (see above p. 26) and Xenocrates (Fragment 81).

203 See Timotin 2012, 301.

conceived of the personal *daimôn* as interior. According to Porphyry, Plotinus' last words in Eustochius' presence were the following: "Try to bring back the divine/the god in us to the divine in the All."[204] There is a detailed discussion about the exact formulation, whether Porphyry used the words *theion* or *theon*.[205] There are, in fact, good reasons for both *theion* and *theon,* since both formulations are attested many times before Porphyry.[206] A passage in Plato's *Timaeus* seems particularly germane, since it occurs in the context of the discussion of the *daimôn*: the divine in us is supposed to assimilate to the revolutions of the universe (90c6–d7). Since Plato recommends to take care of the "divine" and the "*daimôn*" (90c4–6), it seems likely that the "divine in us" is, indeed, the *daimôn*, that is, the

204 Plotinus, *Life of Plotinus* 2, 26–27 (Armstrong, slightly revised).

205 The following variants can be found in the manuscripts: *to en hêmin theion*, *to en hymin theion* and *ton en hymin theon*. See Henry 1953; Schwyzer 1976; Pépin 1992; D'Ancona 2002; Most 2003. The variants using *hymin* will be left aside; Henry argues for *to en hymin theon*, but most other authors assume that *hêmin* is more likely, since we can find similar formulations, both with *theos* and with *theion* in connection with *hêmin*. Most argues that it should be *ton en hêmin theon*, encouraging Eustochius to do philosophy. Both Pépin and d'Ancona argue for *theion*. Schwyzer thinks that *theon* is the *lectio difficilior*.

206 See especially D'Ancona 2002; Pépin 1992, 367–373; Schwyzer 1976. See also Kalligas 2014, 484n12 (III.4). On the idea of the divine in us see also Hausleiter 1957.

intellect.[207] A passage in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is relevant as well, since Aristotle defines "happiness" as "activity in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be the virtue of the best part of us. Whether then this be the intellect, or whatever else it be that is thought to rule and lead us by nature, and to have cognizance of what is noble and divine, either as being itself also actually divine, or as being relatively the divinest part of us, it is the activity of this part of us in accordance with the virtue proper to it that will constitute perfect happiness; and it has been stated already that this activity is the activity of contemplation."[208] The word *daimôn* does not come up in this passage, but the connection of the terms *eudaimonia*, intellect, and "the divinest part of us" could suggest an idea similar to the one in Plato's *Timaeus*. One of the passages that use the word *theos* in a similar phrasing is a famous fragment of Euripides: "For our intellect is in every one of us a god" (*ho nous gar hêmôn estin en hekastôi theos*).[209] All of this suggests that Porphyry might have interpreted the last words as a request to reunite the *daimôn*, that is, the intellect, with the Intellect or even with the One.

To conclude, we can say that like Plotinus, Porphyry supports the rationalization and internalization of the

207 See also Pépin 1992, 369.

208 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* X 7, 1177a12–18 (Rackham). See also *Eudemian Ethics* VIII 2, 1248a27.

209 Euripides, *Fragment* 1018. See also Schwyzer 1976, 92.

personal *daimôn*, but he does not follow Plotinus' more complicated concept of the *daimôn*, turning instead to the influential tradition of the intellect as the *daimôn*, presented in the *Timaeus* and favored by the later Stoics. The story of the conjuration of the guardian *daimôn* does not fit this theory; here Porphyry certainly supports a more traditional view of the guardian *daimôn*; but we have to keep in mind that the purpose of this text is to introduce readers to Plotinus. Other works of Porphyry present a more common notion of divine beings, that is, *daimones* in a general sense, both good[210] and evil.[211]

2. Iamblichus

Iamblichus integrates *daimones* into a hierarchy of higher beings. While, in Plato's *Symposium*, *daimones* are the only mediators, they are now but a part of a whole hierarchy of beings between the highest God and human beings.[212] Iamblichus distinguishes between gods, archangels, angels, *daimones*, heroes, archons, and souls.[213] *Daimones* are ranked somewhere in the middle. Iamblichus describes

210 See for instance Porphyry, *On Abstinence* II, 38, 2.

211 See for instance Porphyry, *On Abstinence* II, 40.

212 See especially Chapter II of *On the Mysteries*.

213 Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* II, 3 (70, 8–9). See also Clarke and Dillon and Hershbell 2004, 87n120; Shaw 1995, 219.

their properties, influences, and ways of appearing.[214] *Daimones* can have negative effects;[215] evil *daimones* are mentioned as well.[216]

In *De Mysteriis*, Iamblichus not only discusses *daimones* in general, but also the personal *daimôn*.[217]

"If I am to reveal to you the truth about the personal daemon, it is not from one part only of the heavenly regions, nor from any one element of the visible realm that this entity is imparted to us, but from the whole cosmos and from the whole variety of life within it and from every sort of body, through all of which the soul descends into generation, there is apportioned to us an individual lot, assigned to each of the parts within us according to an individual authorizing principle."[218]

The *daimôn* is unique to every human being.[219] In his *Letter to Anebo*, to which Iamblichus' text responds, Porphyry connects the acquisition of the *daimôn* "with the circuit of heaven and the 'science' of astrology"; Iamblichus, however, underlines that the *daimôn* comes to us from

214 See especially Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* II. See also Shaw 1995, 219.

215 Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* II, 6 (82, 7–10).

216 Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* II, 6; III, 31 (178, 3–13); X, 7 (293, 8–10).

217 See Dillon 2001; Shaw 1995, 216–219.

218 Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* IX, 6 (280, 1–6).

219 Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* IX, 9 (283, 8–11).

"the cosmos as a whole."[220] The *daimôn* seems to assume a number of functions and roles:

"This daemon, then, stands as a model for us even before the souls descend into generation. When a soul has selected a daemon for its guide, then straightway it stands over it as the fulfiller of the various levels of life of the soul, and as the soul descends into the body it binds it to the body, and it supervises the composite living being arising from it, and personally regulates the particulars of the life of the soul; and all our reasonings we pursue thanks to the first principles which it communicates to us, and we perform such actions as it puts into our minds."[221]

As Dillon points out, what "the personal daemon seems to represent for Iamblichus is a theurgical solution to the problem of the origin of the first principles of reasoning."[222] But it is also presented as the "guide" from Plato's *Phaedo* and the "fulfiller" from Plato's *Republic*. It is chosen by the soul (as in the *Republic*) and is described as a "model" that suggests the choices of lives in the *Republic*. But while Plato says nothing more about the *daimôn*'s role during life than that it is a "guardian" and a "fulfiller," Iamblichus gives it a more active role: it "regulates the particulars" of the life of the soul and "we perform such

220 Dillon 2001, 3.

221 Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* IX, 6 (280, 6–13). On this passage see also Timotin 2012, 314–315.

222 Dillon 2001, 4.

actions as it puts into our minds." Iamblichus "is insistent that the ultimate guiding principle of the human being cannot simply be the soul, even the highest part of it."[223] Even though Iamblichus accepts the existence of evil *daimones*, the personal *daimôn* is always good.[224] And, as is clear in his response to Porphyry, the personal *daimôn* is not to be turned into a part of the soul.[225] Unlike Proclus, however, he does not address Plotinus directly.[226]

Iamblichus also discusses theurgic rituals to make the *daimôn* appear and reveal himself.[227] He is close to ideas we can find, for instance, in the Greek Magical Papyri.[228] All of this shows manifest divergence, even retreat, from Plotinus' account of the *daimôn*. In Iamblichus, the *daimôn*

223 Dillon 2001, 5.

224 See Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* IX, 7 (282, 2–4). See Shaw 1995, 218.

225 See above pp. 96–97.

226 See below pp. 106–109.

227 Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries* IX, 9 (283,13–284, 7): "The evocation of daemons is made in the name of the single god who is their ruler, who from the beginning has apportioned a personal daemon to each individual, and who in the theurgic rites reveals, according to his good pleasure, their personal daemon to each. [. . .] However, when the personal daemon comes to be with each person, then he reveals the mode of worship proper to him and his name, and imparts the particular manner in which he should be summoned." See also Dillon 2001, 7.

228 Dillon 2001, 7. On the concept of the personal *daimôn* in the Greek Magical Papyri see Pachoumi 2013.

is an external tutelary spirit, and it is supposed to assume an active role in the guidance of the individual; some statements even seem to limit the soul's freedom severely. Both accounts have, however, in common, that they are interested in "an explanation for differences between individuals in personality and moral capacity."[229]

3. Proclus

In his *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*, Proclus writes that he wants to discuss *daimones* in general, the guardians of our souls and the *daimôn* of Socrates.[230] He describes *daimones* as intermediary beings; as in Plato's *Symposium*, they bind the All together. And they are ordered in divisions after the twelve gods (following Plato's *Phaedrus*). Proclus directly rejects the view that they could be the souls of the dead.[231] When Proclus speaks about the guardians, he first states that there are six levels of *daimones*, the first on the level of the One, the lowest concerned with matter.[232]

229 Dillon 2001, 3.

230 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 67, 17–68, 1.

231 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 68, 1–70, 15. See also Proclus, *Commentary on the Timaeus* where he discusses *daimones* in several places (see for instance IV, 108, 4; 109, 19–20; V, 204, 24–29).

232 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 71, 1–72, 12.

Proclus writes that the "divine *daimones*" are "the guardians of souls according to their essential nature," while the "the second class of *daimones* watch over the ascents and descents of souls." This distinction allows him to accept Porphyry's testimony about Plotinus' guardian *daimôn* being a god. The higher souls will have "the same *daimôn* on high and in this world, but for the less perfect the *daimôn* that corresponds to the way of life they have set before them differs from the *daimôn* who accords with their essential nature."[233] The lower *daimôn* corresponds to the choice of life, whereas the higher *daimôn* "accords with their essential nature." In either case, the *daimôn* is ranked higher than the soul, and Proclus writes that one should not "accept the view of those who make the rational soul our guardian *daimôn*."[234] Plato's statement in the *Timaeus* should not, according to Proclus, be taken as a literal statement about *daimones*, but just "by analogy."[235] The *daimôn* is not to be rationalized and internalized as in the tradition of the *Timaeus* or in the later Stoics: if one calls the intellect the *daimôn*, this is not to be taken literally at all. Therefore, it is clear that Proclus also has to oppose Plotinus' view, which, of course, also internalizes

233 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 72, 18–73, 8 (O'Neill, slightly revised).

234 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 73, 9–10 (O'Neill, slightly revised).

235 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 73, 18–19.

the *daimôn*. He criticizes Plotinus, without mentioning him by name, but clearly referring to the theory presented in III.4 [15]:

"But not even if some should lay aside the rational soul and assert that the *daimôn* is what is active in the soul, e.g. reason in those that live according to reason, temper in the mettlesome, nor again if some should posit what lies immediately superior to the motive force of our life, e.g. reason in the case of the mettlesome and temper in the case of those who live according to sense desire, not even these seem to me to get at the truth of the matter."[236]

Proclus' depiction of Plotinus' account of the *daimôn* is certainly accurate[237]; we can recognize Plotinus in the second group mentioned in this passage, since he asserts that the level above the active level is the *daimôn*. It is not quite clear who belongs to the first group.[238] Some Stoics assume that the *hêgemonikon* is the *daimôn*, that is, the active part, but they would not, however, maintain that the *daimôn* is the active part, no matter what that level is.[239]

236 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 75, 11–16 (O'Neill, slightly revised).

237 Timotin 2012, 306–309 assumes that Proclus somehow twists Plotinus' ideas.

238 Timotin 2012, 306 thinks that Proclus addresses III.4 [15] 3, 1–3 with these lines. The phrasing is, indeed, similar, but Plotinus does not state here that the rational soul is the *daimôn*.

239 Proclus certainly addresses the Stoic doctrine of the intellect as the *daimôn* a little later in his commentary; see *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 76, 17–78, 6.

Proclus has two main reasons to criticize these opinions. The first is that they turn the *daimôn* into a part of the soul; if they make "guardian *daimones* parts of souls" they fail to take account of the difference between human beings and gods and *daimones*, underlined by Plato in the *Republic*, and overestimate the importance of human life; Plato, Proclus thinks, would not approve of a theory in which *daimones* "who are superior to the heroes" are conceived of "as the parts and faculties of the soul."[240] Plotinus, who interiorizes the *daimôn* and conceives of it as a part of the soul, is a clear target.

Proclus' second objection is that Plotinus' conception does not explain well how changes of a way of life can occur:

"Secondly, the changes of life will introduce many kinds of variation in the (guardian) *daimones*, since the money-loving way of life often changes to the ambitious, this to the life of correct opinion, and this to the life of scientific knowledge; hence (guardian) *daimones* will also vary, since the operative portion of the soul varies. Whether therefore this itself is (guardian) *daimôn* or what precedes it in rank, the (guardian) *daimones* will change along with the change in man's way of life and within one lifetime the same man will have many (guardian)

240 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 75, 16–76, 6 (O'Neill, slightly revised).

daimones, which is absolutely impossible; for a soul never changes the guardianship of the *daimôn* during one lifetime, but he who acts as helmsman to us is the same from birth until the journey before the judges, as Socrates observes in the *Phaedo*."[241]

In these lines, Proclus certainly points at a major difficulty in Plotinus' account. Plotinus is caught, or perhaps he would have said this is something to be investigated further: one does not change a *daimôn,* but one can change one's life, at least to some degree. The concept of the *daimôn* as the level directly above the active level certainly conflicts with the doctrine that the *daimôn* does not change.[242]

Proclus rejects the Plotinian attempt to interiorize the *daimôn*. Divine beings are, according to Proclus, not just a part of the soul, but independent higher beings. And, as in Iamblichus, the *daimôn* assumes a rather active role in the life of the human being:

"For he who guides aright our whole life, fulfilling both the choices we have made before our birth, the gifts of fate and of the gods who guide it, and further bestowing in due measure the illuminations of providence, such is our guardian *daimôn*. As souls we are dependent upon

241 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 76, 6–16 (O'Neill, slightly revised).

242 See Commentary 5, 24–29, especially 28–29.

the Intellect alone, but as souls using a body we are in need of the guardian *daimôn*."[243]

The fact that we are human beings, souls in a body, means that we are in need of some divine assistance to ascend. Plotinus thought that souls did not lose their connection to the higher realm, even when connected to the body, but the later Neoplatonists disagreed: souls in the bodily realm cannot ascend without divine help, without theurgy and without a *daimôn* as a guardian.

CONCLUSION

Plotinus has crafted a strong response or even solution to the demonological in the philosophical tradition which is at the same time a novel meditation on the human psyche. His Platonic and Middle Platonic predecessors integrated the idea of a guardian *daimôn* into fully-fledged demonologies. Guardian *daimones* were posited as demonic beings, ranked higher than human beings, whose task was to watch over the individual human souls. The central, inaugurating text for these issues was Plato's *Symposium*. The leading, alternate explanation comes in the *Timaeus* which presents the *daimôn* as the intellect. This theory is represented by Plutarch in the myth of Timarchus in

243 Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* 77, 4–9 (O'Neill, slightly revised).

On the Daimonion of Socrates[244] and remains the main Stoic interpretation: the *daimôn* is the *nous*, a divine part in the human soul.[245] Plotinus' version is far more down-to-earth and yet sophisticated. He rejects the belief in a common guardian *daimôn*, but he does not follow the Stoic theory of the intellect. In a certain way, the *Timaeus* is the central Platonic text for him, since it interiorizes the *daimôn*. But even though the intellect might be the *daimôn* for many human beings who live on the level of rational thought, it is not necessarily identified with *nous*. His theory seems overcomplicated at times, but it responds to questions about the soul, the self and human responsibility which the other theories fail to answer. It is true that he did not convince his immediate successors, who, like their culture more generally, saw the demonic as more varied and far more active in the world. Later Neoplatonic authors do not follow Plotinus in this account. Proclus even criticizes Plotinus directly for his theory of the *daimôn*.[246] Proclus' demonology seems a retreat from a more interesting and productive philosophical approach. Proclus remains embedded in his historical period and cultural circumstances, but Plotinus' thoughts on the

244 Plutarch, *On the Daimonion of Socrates*, 589F–592F.

245 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* V 27.

246 See above, pp. 106–109.

daimôn are an inspiring contribution to theories of the self and the mind.[247]

The interesting, but difficult, features of the tractate are, in my view, the consequence of two opposing tendencies in Plotinus' text. Schwyzer writes about Plotinus that "to philosophize" is, for him, to "interpret Plato,"[248] but this is only half the story. Plotinus certainly wants to interpret Plato and to integrate all his statements about the *daimôn* into his theory, but the second impetus, which seems even more important, is to present his own ideas on the soul, the self, and the metaphysical realm. The soul reaches from the intelligible realm down to the vegetative level. Plotinus distinguishes between the conscious, active level and unconscious levels. The level above the conscious center is of high interest, since this is the level where the consciousness should turn, if the soul wants to ascend. In later treatises, Plotinus uses the terminology of *hêmeis* and *hêmôn*, of what *we* are and what is *ours*, in order to describe this dynamic of a conscious center and unconscious levels.[249] In treatise III.4 [15], Plotinus uses the word *daimôn* as a name for this

247 See also the following works that treat ancient and modern concepts of the self: Crone and Schnepf and Stolzenberg 2010; Gallaher 2011; Gill 2006; Long 2015; Nickl and Terizakis 2010; Reydams-Schils 2005; Sorabji 2006; Taylor 1989.

248 Schwyzer 1973, 266: "Philosophieren heisst für Plotin nichts anderes als Platon deuten."

249 See the books and articles quoted in note 188.

higher level. To a degree, it can be seen as just another technical term; but it also adds certain evocations to the theory, since Plotinus integrates his theory into debates about the ethical subject, and the influence, internal and external, on the actions and thoughts of an individual. From the beginning of the usage of the term *daimôn* the topic of externalization and internalization has been an essential feature: Are there influences on our actions and ethical choices that seem to be external, but are in fact internal? Therefore, the usage of the term *daimôn* adds interesting features to the theory of mind, the self, and the "we" in Plotinus.

Note on the Greek Text

Line numbers in the translation are approximate and do not always match the original Greek text. Since the commentary follows the sequence of the English translation, there may sometimes be a slight discrepancy in the ordering.

The Greek text adopted is that of the Oxford edition, that is, the *editio minor* (for comparison between readings in HS_1 and HS_2 see vol. 3, xiii–xiv). Deviations from the text are noted in the commentary.

Each *Ennead* is referred to by Roman numerals, followed by the number of the treatise, the chapter of the treatise, and, finally, separated by a comma, the line number or numbers, for example, VI.8.8, 24–27, that is, *Ennead* VI, treatise number 8, Chapter 8, lines 24–27.

It is customary to add the chronological number given by Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinus* (*Vita Plotini*), so that, for example, VI.8 is designated VI.8 [39], that is, *Ennead* VI.8 is 39th in the chronological order. So we adopt the convention as follows: either VI.8.8, 1–5 (where

the chronological number is not given) or VI.8 [39] 8, 1–5 (where it is given).

In this series the chronological number is given only in the Introduction and in other places where it may be of significance for understanding the chronological presentation of Plotinus' philosophical stance. The following chart indicates the chronological order.

Chronological Order of the *Enneads*

Enn.		*Enn.*		*Enn.*		*Enn.*		*Enn.*		*Enn.*	
I.1	**53**	II.1	**40**	III.1	**3**	IV.1	**21**	V.1	**10**	VI.1	**42**
I.2	**19**	II.2	**14**	III.2	**47**	IV.2	**4**	V.2	**11**	VI.2	**43**
I.3	**20**	II.3	**52**	III.3	**48**	IV.3	**27**	V.3	**49**	VI.3	**44**
I.4	**46**	II.4	**12**	III.4	**15**	IV.4	**28**	V.4	**7**	VI.4	**22**
I.5	**36**	II.5	**25**	III.5	**50**	IV.5	**29**	V.5	**32**	VI.5	**23**
I.6	**1**	II.6	**17**	III.6	**26**	IV.6	**41**	V.6	**24**	VI.6	**34**
I.7	**54**	II.7	**37**	III.7	**45**	IV.7	**2**	V.7	**18**	VI.7	**38**
I.8	**51**	II.8	**35**	III.8	**30**	IV.8	**6**	V.8	**31**	VI.8	**39**
I.9	**16**	II.9	**33**	III.9	**13**	IV.9	**8**	V.9	**5**	VI.9	**9**

	Enn.		*Enn.*		*Enn.*		*Enn.*		*Enn.*		*Enn.*
1	I.6	**10**	V.1	**19**	I.2	**28**	IV.4	**37**	II.7	**46**	I.4
2	IV.7	**11**	V.2	**20**	I.3	**29**	IV.5	**38**	VI.7	**47**	III.2
3	III.1	**12**	II.4	**21**	IV.1	**30**	III.8	**39**	VI.8	**48**	III.3
4	IV.2	**13**	III.9	**22**	VI.4	**31**	V.8	**40**	II.1	**49**	V.3
5	V.9	**14**	II.2	**23**	VI.5	**32**	V.5	**41**	IV.6	**50**	III.5
6	IV.8	**15**	III.4	**24**	V.6	**33**	II.9	**42**	VI.1	**51**	I.8
7	V.4	**16**	I.9	**25**	II.5	**34**	VI.6	**43**	VI.2	**52**	II.3
8	IV.9	**17**	II.6	**26**	III.6	**35**	II.8	**44**	VI.3	**53**	I.1
9	VI.9	**18**	V.7	**27**	IV.3	**36**	I.5	**45**	III.7	**54**	I.7

Synopsis

Chapter 1: Soul as a general principle, especially in its vegetative form, and its relation to matter and the body.

1–3 The first principles "remain" while something comes from them. Soul, however, is in motion when it creates.

4–5 The vegetative power in human beings and in plants.

5–12 The generation of matter.

12–14 Indefiniteness on the level of the higher realities.

14–17 The generation of body.

Chapter 2: Soul's ways of life and corresponding reincarnations.

1–6 The care for the soulless is mainly the task of the vegetative soul.

6–11 In human beings the rational part is—or at least should be—the ruling part, but the other parts of the soul are present and can divert the focus from rationality.

11–15 After death the soul will become what was dominant in it.

16–30 Possible reincarnations of the soul (human, animal, plant).

Chapter 3: The *daimôn* as the inactive level above the active level we live on.

1–3 Who becomes a *daimôn* or a god?

3–8 The *daimôn* a human being *is* or can *become* (lines 1–3) is not the same as the *daimôn* one has. The latter is defined as the inactive part of the soul above the part that is active.

8–10 The choice of the *daimôn*.

10–20 How can the *daimôn* "lead"?

21–27 Soul is manifold; "we" are an "intelligible universe."

Chapter 4: The vegetative principle and the world-soul.

1–7 The vegetative principle in us and in the world-soul.

7–10 The world-soul does not have sense-perception.

10–13 The world-soul has no self-consciousness nor pleasure.

13–14 In conclusion, Plotinus states that he will deal with the cosmos elsewhere.

Chapter 5: A series of questions regarding the *daimôn*.

1–4 Plato's myth in the *Republic* as a "riddling statement" referring to a general "resolution and disposition of the soul."

4–6 The body is not the source of evil, provided the resolution (*prohairesis*) of the soul determines the life.

7–9 The character (*êthos*) of the soul comes before the body.

10–14 Could someone be potentially good or bad in the world beyond and then become actually good or bad in this world? What happens if a wise person gets a bad body or an evil person a good body?

15–19 Proof for Plotinus' theory from Plato's myth in the *Republic*.

19–24 The *daimôn* is "ours" if we understand "us" as souls, but "not ours" if "we" are the living being.

24–29 In what sense is the *daimôn* one had chosen the "fulfiller" (*apoplêrôtês*) of the choice of life?

Chapter 6: Further questions regarding the *daimôn*. The fate of the soul in the afterlife and the beginning of a new life.

1–10 The *spoudaios* and his *daimôn.*

10–17 The *daimôn* after death.

17–18 The *daimôn* of those who become a wild beast is "base or simpleminded."

18–19 The souls who have lived a pure life can either be in the upper visible world or they transcend the visible world altogether.

19–30 The souls that go to the upper visible world go to the sun, a planet, or the sphere of the fixed stars.

30–33 The souls that leave the visible realm transcend "the daimonic nature and every fate of becoming" and the "visible world" altogether.

33–45 Soul is not divided in itself, but divisible among bodies, especially the vegetative soul.

46–50 The return of the soul to the visible realm and its fate in the new life.

51–60 The new life of the soul and destiny.

Translation of Plotinus
Ennead *III.4*

On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit

1. Some realities come into being while their [principles] remain, but the soul was already said to be in motion when it produced sense-perception, which has the status of a substance, and the vegetative power, all the way down to plants.

For soul also has this [power of growth] when it is in us, but it [the vegetative power] does <not> rule since it is a part; when it comes to be in | plants, it rules as one 5
that has become the only one.

Does this [power of growth] then produce nothing? It produces something altogether different from itself, for there is no longer life after it, but what is produced is lifeless.

What is it then?

As everything that was produced before this was produced as formless and it is formed by turning toward what

produces it, | like something that is being nourished, so here that which is produced is not yet the form of soul—for it does not live yet—but complete indefiniteness. For if there is indefiniteness also in the superior [levels], it is in a form, for it is not altogether indefinite, but only in reference to its perfection; this here is completely [indefinite].

When it is perfected it becomes | body, having received the form which is suitable to its potentiality, [matter being] the receptacle of the one that produces and nourishes. And this alone in the body is the last of the above in the last of what is below.

2. And the statement "every soul cares for what is soulless" is mostly said about this [soul]; the others work differently. Soul "traverses the whole heaven, [appearing] sometimes in one form and sometimes in another," in the form of sense-perception or of rational thought or in the form of the growth principle itself. Its | dominant part produces what is suitable to itself, while the others are inactive, for they are outside.

In human beings the lower parts do not rule, but they are present; and the better part does not always rule, for they are there and have a certain space. Therefore we are like beings of sense-perception, for we have the organs of sense-perception; and we are like plants for we have a body which grows | and creates. So they all work together;

but it is in accordance with the better part that the whole form is human.

When it [soul] leaves [the body] it will assume the nature of its predominant aspect [while in the body]. "Therefore" we have to "flee" upward so that we do not [fall into] the [faculty of] sense-perception by following sensible images, or into the growth faculty by following the desire to procreate and | the desire for luxurious food, but [we 15
have to flee] to the intelligible, to the intellect, and god.

Those who took care of what was human in them will become human beings again. Those who lived according to sense-perception alone will become animals. If they lived according to sense-perception with anger, wild animals; and the difference in them makes the difference in those. Those [who live] with desire and | the lust of the 20
desiring part will be licentious and gluttonous animals. If there is not sense-perception along with these, but only a sluggish level of sense-perception accompanying them, they will become plants. For the vegetative was mostly or only active in them, and they were practicing to be turned into a tree.

Those who love the Muses and are pure | in other 25
respects will become musical [animals]. Those who are kings without reason will become eagles, if they did not exhibit any other evil quality. Astronomers without scientific method who turn always toward the sky will become birds which fly high. Those who lived according

to political virtue will become human beings. Those who had a lesser part in political virtue will become a social animal, a bee or something like that.

3. Who, then, [becomes] a *daimôn*? He who was one here. And who a god? He who was one here. For that part of everyone which was active will guide [after death] since it is leading here.

Is this, then, "the *daimôn* to whom he was allotted while he lived"?

No, but [that *daimôn* is] what is before it [that is, before the active part]. For this | presides, while being inactive; what comes after it is active. And if what is active is that through which we perceive, the *daimôn* is the rational part. If we live according to the rational part, the *daimôn* is what presides over it, inactive, giving assent to the working part. So it is said rightly that "it is we who choose." For we choose what superintends us according to the | life [we choose].

But why is it that that "guides" us?

Well, it is not the task of the [principle that guided] man while he lived to guide [after death], but it guided before, when the man still lived; when he [the man] stopped living, it [the *daimôn*] gave its activity to another [*daimôn*], since he [the man] died in the life according to its [the *daimôn*'s] activity. This [*daimôn*] now wants to guide and, when it rules, lives itself, and it has another as a *daimôn*.

But if | it [*daimôn*] is burdened by the preponderance of a bad disposition, that circumstance brings its own punishment. In this way the bad man also who is weighed down to the worse, down to the resemblance of what is active in his life, [ends up in] the life of a wild beast. However, if a man can follow the *daimôn* who is above him, he rises, living according to who is guiding, setting in charge his better part, | and after that another, up to the higher world.

For the soul is manifold and everything, the above and the below as far as there is life; and we are, everyone of us, an intelligible universe; with the lower parts we touch this world, with the higher parts and the parts of the universe we touch the intelligible world; and we remain above with everything else that is intelligible, but with the | lowest part we are bound to the lower world; just as if we gave an outflow from the higher to the lower, or rather an activity, since the higher does not suffer a loss.

4. Now does this part [the vegetative soul] always remain in the body?

No. If we turn, this part will turn as well.

And what about the soul of the All? Will its [lowest] part also be separated when it turns?

Well, it [the soul of the All] does not incline with its lowest part, for it does not | go or go down, but, while it remains, the body of the cosmos is attached to it and, so to

speak, illuminated by it; it does not cause trouble nor does it produce care, for the cosmos lies in what is unchanging.

What then? Does it not perceive through any sense-perception? It does not have sight, he says, for it has no eyes. And it has no ears nor nostrils, clearly, | nor a tongue. What then? How about self-consciousness like that which we have of that which is within us?

No, since its parts are in a uniform state, its state is total calm. And there is no pleasure inherent in it. So the vegetative principle is present without being present, and similarly the principle of sense-perception.

But we will speak about the cosmos elsewhere. For now, insofar as it is connected [to the question we are treating here], this issue has been [sufficiently] discussed.

5. But if it is there [in the other world] that the soul makes the choice of its *daimôn* and [its future] life, how can we still have power over anything [here]?

Well, the choice there [Plato] speaks of refers, as in a riddle, in a general and absolute way, to the overall resolution and disposition of the soul. But if the resolution of the soul dominates | and that part [of it] rules that is at hand from previous lives, then no longer is the body the principle of any evil for man. If the soul's character comes before the body and the soul gets that [*daimôn*] which it chose and does not change its *daimôn*, as is asserted,

then the sage does not arise on this level of existence, nor does the bad man.

| But maybe one is one or the other merely potentially [in the other world], and becomes actually [good or bad] [in this world]?

What, then, if the [man] wise in character happens to get a bad body, or the other way around?

Well, the powers of the good or bad soul can supply for itself more or less the appropriate bodies, since other blows of fortune from outside do not actually divert the overall mind-set [of the soul]. | But when it is said that there first [occur] the "casting of the lots," then "the paradigms of the lives," then [sc., when it is said] to the souls that they are to choose their *daimôn*, and that they choose the lives from those presented to them according to their character, he [Plato] rather gives the power to the souls, who arrange what is given according to their own character.

For that this *daimôn* is not altogether outside (but | only to the extent that he is not bound to us) and he is not active, he is "ours" if we speak about the soul, but "not ours" if "we" are the human beings who have a life under him, according to the testimony of the *Timaeus*. If it is understood like this, there is no contradiction, but there would be some discord if one understood the *daimôn* differently.

The phrase | "fulfiller of what one chose" is in accord with this. For it does not allow [the soul] to descend much further to what is bad—but only that [element] is active which is beneath it—nor to what is above it or on the same level. For one cannot become other than how one is.

6. What then is the sage? It is he who is active through his better part. He would not have been properly a sage if he needed to have the *daimôn* as his helper. For the active element in him is intellect. Therefore he is himself a *daimôn* or in accord with a *daimôn*, and his *daimôn* is a god.

So it [the *daimôn*] is actually beyond the intellect? If | what is beyond the intellect is his *daimôn*, why has this not been the case from the outset? Through the disturbance of coming to birth. The inner movement is, nonetheless, already in existence before reason and it reaches out for what is its own.

Does it [this movement] always succeed? Not always, since the soul has a disposition such that it will—under these [circumstances], these particular [circumstances], being what it is |—have this life and this resolution.

But this *daimôn* about which we speak is said not to remain the same when it has led [the soul] to Hades unless the soul chooses the same [life] again. So how was it before [the choice]? The leading to the judgment means that it goes into the same form after death which it had

before birth. Then it is present, as if from a new beginning, in the time until the next birth of the souls | that are being punished—though that is not a life for them, but judgment.

But what about those who enter the bodies of wild animals? Do they have something lower than a *daimôn*? Well, they have a *daimôn* that is base or simpleminded.

And those who [enter] the higher world?

Of those who [enter] the higher realm some [enter] the visible world, others rise above it. Those who [enter] the visible realm either [enter] | the sun or one or other of the planets or the sphere of the fixed stars, every soul insofar as it has exercised its reasonable activity here. For one has to assume that there also is a cosmos in our soul, not only an intelligible one, but a disposition of the same kind as the world-soul. As that soul [the world-soul] is distributed over the sphere of fixed stars and the planets in accordance with its | different powers, so our powers are of the same kind as those powers and an activity comes from each of them, and when the soul has been freed it goes to the star which is in concord with the character and power which was active and lived in them; and each one will have as its god or *daimôn* either the corresponding star itself or what is over | such power. This, however, has to be investigated further.

Those who have transcended the visible world have passed beyond the daimonic nature and every sort of fate

bound up with becoming and totally beyond what is in this visible world; so long as the soul is there, the essence in it which loves becoming will be lifted up as well. If one says of this essence that it is | "that which comes to be divisible among bodies," having multiplied itself and parceled itself out to the bodies, one will speak correctly. The soul is not divided in magnitude. For it is the same in everything, a whole and again one. And out of one living being many can be produced, if the soul divides itself this way, as in the case of plants. | For this soul is also divisible among bodies. And when it remains in the same [body], it gives something of itself, like the soul in plants. And where the soul departs, it gives a gift before departing, as in the case of uprooted plants or in living beings who die, and out of the decay many are produced from one. The appropriate power from the All-Soul co-operates as well, | which is the same as the one here.

When the soul comes back here, it has the same or another *daimôn*, according to the life which it is going to make for itself. With this *daimôn*, the soul first embarks on this universe as on a boat, then the so-called nature | of the spindle receives it and sets it in the seat of its fortune in life, as on a ship.

While the vault of heaven like a wind drives around the one who sits or walks about in a ship, many and manifold sights appear and changes and chance events, as also in the same ship one is moved either through the motion

of the ship or by | oneself through one's own impulse, 55
which one has got through being on a ship in accordance with one's own manner. For not everyone is moved or wants or acts similarly in the same circumstances. So different things happen to different [persons] arising out of the same or different occurrences, and the same things happen to different people even when the circumstances are different. | For this is the sort of thing that destiny is. 60

Commentary

Title

The title is derived from Plato's *Phaedo* (107d6–7). See also Commentary 3, 3–4 and 3, 8–9. The common title in English, used in this translation as well, is "On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit" (Armstrong; similarly Gerson: "On our Allotted Daemon"), but the Greek (and other translations) make it clear that the guardian spirit is not allotted to us, but we to the spirit. Therefore the correct translation of the title is: "On the *Daimôn* that Received Us by Lot" (see for instance "Der Daimon der uns erloste" [Harder], "Du démon qui nous a reçus en partage" [Bréhier]; "Sur le démon qui nous a reçus en partage" [Guyot]; similarly Ferwerda, Igal, Kalligas, Müller, Radice, Faggin). Sometimes the title is interpreted as a fixed

expression: "De proprio cujusque daemone" (Ficino) or "Our Tutelary Spirit" (MacKenna). Kalligas points out that there is a prior history of a connection between the *daimôn* and the term "allotted"; he refers to Empedocles "who had spoken of those *daimones* 'to whom life long-lasting is allotted'" (fr. 31B115.DK); "the verse may well have been later misinterpreted as referring to human life" (Kalligas 2014, 488 [III.4 Title], with a number of earlier and later examples on the employment of the notion).

Chapter 1

The first chapter of the treatise does not even mention the daimôn*, but discusses soul as a general principle, especially in its vegetative form and its relation to matter and the body. A general psychological discussion in a treatise on the* daimôn *may seem surprising, but the two topics are closely linked. For Plotinus, the discussion of the* daimôn *is not demonology, but psychology; and psychology is necessarily the treatment of the human soul and soul in general (for a more detailed explanation of this connection see Introduction, pp. 56–93). Furthermore, a treatment of the soul is always linked to a discussion of Intellect and the One, since Soul is not separate from these higher realities.*

Thus, Plotinus starts by observing that the first principles create without being in motion, but that the soul is in motion. The vegetative functions of the soul are present in every soul, but they do not dominate in a human being. Here, Plotinus clearly continues the discussion from the earlier treatise V.2 [11] where, at the end, he announces a further treatment of the soul that comes to be in plants (2, 29–31). Then he discusses what comes from the soul, and that the last product of the soul is lifeless and formless, that is, matter (see Commentary 1, 5–12). Furthermore, soul transforms matter into something that has form, that is, the body (see Commentary 1, 14–17).

Lines 1–3

In the first lines of the treatise Plotinus speaks about the first principles that "remain" while something comes from them, and about the soul that is in motion when it creates. The first principles that "remain" are the One and the Intellect; the Soul, that is, the third principle, which is at the "border" of the intelligible realm, creates in a different way; it is in motion itself when it creates. Soul as a general principle generates both the sensitive and the vegetative power of the soul. Plotinus does not mention the rational soul at this point, but the distinction between sensitive and vegetative soul is clearly inspired by Aristotle's theory of the soul (see Introduction, p. 61).

1, 1 *realities*: *Realities* translates *hypostaseis*. As Guyot 2003, 351n2 rightly notes, this term does not refer to the three so-called "hypostases" (the One, the Intellect, and the Soul); Plotinus never uses this term in this technical sense. *Hypostasis* means simply "reality" or "existence" (see also Hadot 1990, 24). So here, Plotinus does not speak about the One or the Intellect, since they are what creates without moving, but about what comes from them. See also V.2 [11] 1, 26. On the term *hypostasis* see also Dörrie 1955, 68–74 (on Plotinus).

1, 1 *remain*: To remain (*menein*) is a characteristic of the first principles that come forth (*prohodos*) without diminishing, since they abide in themselves. Plotinus explains this process in V.2 [11] where he states that both the One and the Intellect "remain" while something comes from them (see especially V.2 [11] 1, 13–18). The One is beyond all movement (see also V.1 [10]), whereas there is some kind of interior movement in the Intellect which Plotinus describes a "turning back" or "looking" toward the One (V.1 [10] 6, 47–48; V.2 [11] 1, 9–13) (see also Guyot 2003, 351n3). On the term *menein* see also Dörrie 1955, 68–69.

1, 2 *the soul was already said to be in motion*: Plotinus refers to treatise V.2 [11] 1, 18–21 where the soul is said to be in motion when it produces. The higher levels of reality remain in themselves, but the soul does not remain

unmoved when it creates. As Kalligas 2014, 488 (III.4.1.1–3) writes, this characteristic goes back to Plato's *Phaedrus,* where the soul is said to be always in motion (*aeikinêton*; 245c5). See also Plotinus IV.7 [2] 9, 6–9; V.1 [10] 12, 5; III.6 [26] 3, 22–26; III.7 [45] 11, 23–30 and Kalligas 2014, 271–272 (III.2.1.8–19); 488–489 (III.4.1.1–3).

1, 3 *the sense-perception, which has the status of a substance*: The expression *aisthêsin tên en hypostasei* is not altogether clear. Does it refer to sense-perception as the sensitive soul (Guyot 2003, 351n4) or to the sense-perception we can find in a living being? Armstrong's translation is a little obscure ("sense-perception which is its expressed form"; similarly MacKenna); other translations leave the issue unclear (Igal, Ferwerda, Müller, Radice). Guyot votes for the first option ("la sensation qui a le statut d'une réalité"; similarly Faggin and Gerson); he (Guyot 2003, 351n4) refers to III.5 [50] 4, 2 where the expression *en hypostasei* is used in a similar fashion ("Does, then, each individual soul have a love like itself which has a real substantial existence?"). In many other instances, *hypostasis* refers to an entity or a substance in a general sense (see for instance I.8 [51] 3, 20 or VI.4 [22] 9, 40–41). No matter how one interprets the expression, there is a difference between the usage of *hypostasis* in this line and in line 1; the substances mentioned in l. 3 are not the realities produced by the unmoved principles

mentioned in l. 1, since neither living beings nor the sensitive soul are produced by the higher realities. I am following Guyot's interpretation, since I assume that Plotinus is talking about the lower level of soul, the level which he sometimes describes as an "image" of soul. See for instance V.2 [11] 1, 18–21, where Plotinus explains that the soul "brings forth an image" which is then described as "sensation and the principle of growth in plants." On the idea of the "image of the soul," see also Commentary 3, 25 and Introduction, pp. 62–63.

1, 3 *the vegetative power, all the way down to plants*: After having talked about the power of sense-perception, Plotinus now speaks about the nature (*phusis*), that is, about the vegetative power that is present even in plants (see also V.2 [11] 1, 21 and 23). The expression *phusin kai mechri phutôn* may be clarified by a similar expression Plotinus used in V.2 [11] 1, 23, where he writes that the higher soul reaches down (*phthanein*) to the plants (Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, Ib, 542).

Lines 4–5

Plotinus continues to speak about the vegetative power and its function or position in human beings and in plants. The vegetative function is present in all living beings, in human beings, in animals (which are not mentioned here) and in plants. In human beings it is the lowest part of the

soul, since human beings also possess higher faculties, and these faculties rule, so that the lowest faculty of nature is present, but not ruling. In plants this faculty dominates since it has become, as Plotinus says, the only one. The higher faculties are not there or, to be more precise, they are not present and active.

1, 4 *but it [the vegetative power] does <not> rule since it is a part*: My translation follows Müller's emendation (see also Bréhier; Harder; MacKenna; Faggin [in the translation, but not in the Greek text]): *<ou> kratei de meros ousa*. The manuscript version (also in HS_1) is *kratei de meros ousa*, which is problematic since the meaning would be: "it rules because it is a part"; and that does not seem to make any sense here. Other attempts to correct the text are the following: 1) *kratei de meros ousan* ("but it [our soul] rules [the vegetative power] which is a part"): (Kirchhoff; HS_2; Kalligas; Armstrong; Igal; Ferwerda; Radice; Gerson; Guyot). 2) In the *Addenda*, Henry-Schwyzer strike *ousa* from the text, probably assuming that the *ousa* after *meros* is a dittography (copying the *ousa* after *hêmin*). The meaning would be: "our soul rules the part." All three emendations do not alter the meaning, which is that the vegetative part is present in human beings, but does not rule in them because it is merely a part, while in plants it rules, since it is the only one. My argument against Kirchhoff and the *Addenda* is that they suppose a direct object for the verb *kratei* (*phusis* or *meros*), but Plotinus does not use *kratei*

with a direct object in similar occurrences (for a list of the instances of this word in this treatise see Commentary 1, 4 and 5). However, Müller's emendation presupposes a more significant scribal error (omission of the word *ou* instead of omission of a single letter).

1, 4 and 5 *rule/rules*: Plotinus speaks about ruling parts of the soul on four other occasions in the present treatise (2, 5; 2, 6; 3, 14; 5, 5).

Lines 5–12

Plotinus now turns to the question of the product of the power of growth, a question he had announced at the end of treatise V.2 [11]. He writes that this product is "altogether different" and "lifeless," but he does not name it—which raises the question of whether he is referring to matter or the body. Concerning matter and the generation of matter in the *Enneads,* see Introduction, pp. 63–66. As I say there, I agree with Kalligas, who assumes that Plotinus is speaking about matter in this passage (Kalligas 2014, 240 [I.8.14.51–54]; see also 489 [III.4.1.5–12]; and Guyot 2003, 336–337; 351n6 and 11; Radice 2003, 590n3; Igal 1985, 103n3). The choice of words and the fact that there seem to be two stages, that is, first the generation of matter (lines 5–12) and then that of the body (lines 14–17; see Commentary 1, 14–17) suggests that Plotinus is speaking of matter even though he does not use the term. The

choice of several terms supports this interpretation, since Plotinus uses them in similar contexts in other writings (see Commentary 1, 6–7; 8; 9; 15).

1, 5–6 *Does this [power of growth] then produce nothing?* At the end of treatise V.2 [11] Plotinus writes: "What, then, about the soul which comes to exist in plants? Does it not generate anything? Yes, that in which it is" (V.2 [11] 2, 29–30). He then states that this has to be investigated further (2, 30–31). Now, he comes back to this issue, with a very similar choice of words.

1, 6–7 *something altogether different . . . lifeless*: The lifeless product of the soul is matter (see Commentary 1, 5–12). For a similar description see II.4 [12] 5, 16–18 (see Guyot 2003, 351n7). The term "lifeless" (*azôn*) is used only in one other treatise, III.6 [26] 6, 26, where Plotinus speaks about intellect, being, matter, and so on. This word is used nine times before Plotinus, twice by a student of Theophrastus, Praxiphanes, and then seven times by the grammarian Aelius Herodianus (and Pseudo-Herodianus), an author from Alexandria who lived in Rome in the 2nd century CE. It could then have been a technical term current in Alexandria (see also Commentary 1, 8).

1, 8 *formless*: See VI.7 [38] 3, 12 where Plotinus uses the term (*amorphôtos*) in a discussion about matter (it is the only other occurrence of this term in the *Enneads*; see

also Guyot 2003, 351n8). This word is hardly used before Plotinus at all, once in a fragment of Sophocles and then twenty-four times by the astronomer Ptolemy (late 2nd century, Alexandria) and once by Clement of Alexandria. Perhaps another technical term from Alexandria? (See Commentary 1, 6–7.)

1, 9 *is formed*: The verb *eidopoieô* is used eleven times in Plotinus, and almost always in discussions about matter. See V.1 [10] 7, 41 (the offspring of intellect, which is, so to speak, given a form); II.4 [12] 10, 20 (in a discussion about matter); IV.4 [28] 2, 7 (in a discussion about remembrance, using the comparison of matter being formed); 35, 67 (things being formed by rational principles); 38, 20 (matter); VI.6 [34] 5, 48 (to be formed like matter); VI.7 [38] 11, 26 (in a discussion about earth, stones, plants and the forming principle in them); 17, 41 (the Good and Intellect); 33, 34 (matter); I.8 [51] 5, 17 (in a discussion about evil). Guyot 2003, 351–352n9 draws attention to the fact that Plotinus sometimes distinguished between *morphê* and *eidos* (for instance in III.8 [30] 2) but that he does not make that distinction here; in line 15, though, Guyot writes, *morphê* might mean "figure" and not "form."

1, 9 *by turning toward what produces it*: The *epistrophê* is a central motif of Neoplatonic philosophy. The origin remains in itself (*monê*) and comes forth (*prohodos*), and everything comes back to it (*epistrophê*). Here, the

turning back is presented as a condition of coming to be. If something is created, for instance the soul, it comes to be soul because it turns toward Intellect and the One where it came from. This, of course, is not a single event of creation, but a permanent process. Plotinus uses this process to explain what happens to matter (see Commentary 1, 11–12).

1, 9–10 *toward what produces it, like something that is being nourished*: Plotinus uses the verb "nourish" (*ektrephô*) three times in the *Enneads*, always in connection with the verb *gennaô* and with a similar meaning. See V.1 [10] 3, 12–15: "Since then its existence derives from Intellect, soul is intellectual, and its intellect is in discursive reasonings, and its perfection comes from Intellect, like a father who brings to maturity (*ekthrepsantos*) a son whom be begat (*egennêsen*) imperfect in comparison with himself." See also V.2 [11] 1, 9–18, where Plotinus speaks about the two phases of generation in regard to Intellect and soul (see also Guyot 2003, 352n10 on this passage). In 1, 16 Plotinus uses the terms "nourish" and "produce" again (see Commentary 1, 16).

1, 11–12 *complete indefiniteness*: The noun *aoristia* is used ten times in the *Enneads*, never in Plato, and three times in Aristotle, once in a context pertinent to our subject (*On the Generation of Animals* 778a6: "the indeterminateness of matter"; see also Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, 12, 1037a27

where he uses the adjective *aoriston* in reference to matter). In the *Enneads*, it is very often used in the context of a discussion about matter; Plotinus ascribes formlessness to the soul that tries to understand matter. See especially II.4 [12] 10, 3 and 12; 11, 31 (understanding matter through *aoristia* in the soul, since like is understood by like); 11, 37 (matter); III.4 [15] 1, 12 (see Commentary 1, 12); III.5 [50] 7, 6 (indefiniteness in the soul before it attains the good) and 18 (Love having the nature of indefiniteness); I.8 [51] 4, 30 (the image of the soul is filled with indefiniteness when it turns toward matter). See also II.4 [12] 13, 7–30 where Plotinus uses the adjective *aoriston* in a discussion about matter (see Kalligas 2014, 490 [III.4.1.14–17]). In our passage, "complete indefiniteness" is ascribed to matter itself. Matter is produced by soul, but it does not live yet, it does not have the form of the soul, since it is "complete indefiniteness." These words confirm, in my view, that Plotinus is speaking about matter and not about the body, since he would not attribute "complete indefiniteness" to the body, which has a form and life (on the topic of the generation of matter see Commentary 1, 5–14 and Introduction, pp. 63–66). See also Kalligas 2014, 489 (III.4.1.12–14).

Lines 12–14

Indefiniteness on superior levels is not complete, but only in reference to its perfection.

1, 12 *indefiniteness*: There is indefiniteness on the higher levels only in the sense that they fall short of their completion and perfection; complete indefiniteness is only found on the level of matter (see Commentary 1, 11–12). Plotinus speaks about this kind of "indefiniteness" in II.4 [12] 3, 1–5 (see Kalligas 2014, 310–311 [II.4.3.1–3 and 4–5]; 314 [II 4.5.31–37]).

Lines 14–17

The last lines of Chapter 1 treat matter, soul, and the body that comes from them. What is completely indefinite, that is, matter, is perfected and formed into a body. In this process, matter is the receptacle for the principle that produces it and nourishes it, that is, for the soul or rather the vegetative soul. Vegetative soul is the last level of the intelligible, and it is present in the material world.

1, 15 *form which is suitable to its potentiality*: It is not entirely clear whether *morphê* should be understood as "form" or "shape." Guyot refers to the fact that the notion *morphê* can be a synonym for *eidos*, meaning "form,"

but it can also signify "shape" (Guyot 2003, 351–352n9). Kalligas 2014, 490 (III.4.1.14–17) assumes that Plotinus is referring to the "shape of the body" (see also Guyot; MacKenna). Other authors translate "form" (Armstrong; Faggin; Bréhier; Radice; Igal). My translation follows the latter because I do not think that Plotinus is speaking about the physical shape of the body, but about its form in the Aristotelian sense of the soul being the form of the body. See Aristotle, *On the Soul* II, 412a6–10: "We describe one class of existing things as substance; and this we subdivide into three: (1) matter, which in itself is not an individual thing; (2) shape or form, in virtue of which individuality is directly attributed, and (3) the compound of the two. Matter is potentiality, while form is realization or actuality" (see Introduction, p. 75).

1, 15 *receptacle*: The term "receptacle" (*hupodochê*) refers to matter. Plotinus uses this term twelve times in the *Enneads*, and he almost always speaks of matter as the receptacle or as the receptacle and the nurse of all becoming. The terms "receptacle" and "nurse" stem from Plato's *Timaeus* (49a5–6): "the receptacle, and as it were the nurse, of all Becoming" (see also 51a5). Plato speaks about the "third kind" or *chôra* ("space"), not about "matter," but Plotinus clearly interprets Plato's statement as referring to matter. See II.4 [12] 1, 1–2 ("What I called 'matter' is said to be some sort of 'substrate' and 'receptacle' of forms");

6, 1 ("receptacle of bodies"); 11, 37 ("capacity of receiving size in itself"); III.6 [26] 13, 12–15 ("the receptacle and nurse of all becoming"); 14, 31 (matter as a receptacle); 19, 17 (matter as a receptacle).

1, 16 *produces and nourishes*: The soul, or rather the vegetative soul, is what produces and nourishes the body. On the term "nourish" see Commentary 1, 9–10.

1, 17 *the last of the above in the last of what is below*: The soul is the lowest level of the intelligible universe, and the vegetative soul is its lowest part. This lower soul is present in the material world, in bodies and even in matter, that is, in what is the last of the below. Kalligas 2014, 490 (III.4.1.14–17) writes: "The perceptible shape that emerges in a body and thereby 'perfects' it constitutes the 'ultimate' or 'terminally distant' (*eschaton*) reflection of the formative activity of Being, and for this reason it lacks any potency or vitality: it is a 'dead' *logos*" (referring to III.8.2.27–34 and Santa Cruz de Prunes 1978, 109–110).

Chapter 2

The first lines of Chapter 2 provide both a conclusion to Chapter 1 on the soul as a general principle and the vegetative soul and a transition to the topic of the human soul and its possible reincarnations. Soul is first presented as a general principle caring for what is soulless (quoting Plato's Phaedrus *246b6); Plotinus explains that the care for the soulless is mainly the task of the vegetative soul, which was the main topic in Chapter 1. Then, he moves on to the human soul. While the vegetative part is the ruling part in plants, in human beings it is present, but not ruling, since the higher soul, that is, the rational soul, rules—or, to be more precise—the rational part should rule. For it becomes clear that the reincarnation depends on the soul's way of life in this present life, and that souls will become what they excelled in, and that might be on the level of sense-perception or even the vegetative life, which in turn results in reincarnations as animals or plants. The Platonic background of this chapter is very strong, especially as regards the fate of the soul after death and its future reincarnations (see especially Plato's* Phaedo*;* Phaedrus, Republic *and* Timaeus*).*

Lines 1–6

Plotinus begins by concluding his discussion of the vegetative soul: he states that the care for the soulless is mainly the task of the vegetative soul. But soul comprises not only the vegetative soul, but also the faculties of sense-perception and rationality. Plotinus quotes Plato's principle enunciated in the *Phaedrus* that "all soul cares for what is soulless" (246b6; my translation). The main elements of the myth of the *Phaedrus*, especially those addressing the fall of the soul and its connection to the body, will provide the background for the remainder of the chapter, where Plotinus discusses the different fates of the soul according to its attachment to the body and the material world (see Kalligas 2014, 490 [III.4.2.1–6]).

2, 1 *every soul cares for what is soulless*: Plotinus quotes verbatim the famous line from Plato's *Phaedrus* (246b6), except that he omits *pantos*. In the *Phaedrus*, this statement is the hinge between the proof for the immortality of the soul and the comparison of the soul with a charioteer and two horses. Plato states that *pasa psychê*, that is, "all that is soul" or "every soul" cares for "all that is soulless." From what follows in the *Phaedrus* it is clear that Plato's main interest in the myth is not soul in general and its relation to the soulless, but specifically the human souls who descend into bodies. Plotinus, however, states that

this line is "is mostly said about this [soul]," that is, about the vegetative soul he discussed in Chapter 1. The vegetative soul makes a body a living body; it is responsible for nourishment and growth and therefore mostly involved with the body. The other forms of soul, Plotinus writes, work differently; the rational soul is, of course, supposed to turn upward toward the intellect and therefore away from what is soulless. But even the sensitive soul is said not to be primarily involved in the care of the soulless. Plotinus does not contradict Plato's general statement about the care of the soul for what is soulless, but attempts to be precise and explain what part of the soul is involved in this care.

2, 2–3 *Soul traverses the whole heaven, [appearing] sometimes in one form and sometimes in another*: Plotinus continues his quotation from Plato's *Phaedrus* (246b6–7), again verbatim, save for the omission of *gignomenê* at the end. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato goes on to distinguish the perfect soul which is "fully winged" and "mounts upwards and governs the whole world" and the soul which "has lost its wings" and becomes involved with a body (246b7–c6). Plotinus, on the other hand, does not pursue the mythical treatment of the soul, but states simply that there are three forms of the soul (see Commentary 2, 3–4).

2, 3–4 *in the form of sense-perception or of rational thought or in the form of the growth principle itself*: Plotinus enumerates three forms of the soul, the vegetative, the sensitive, and the rational soul. This distinction is not Platonic, but stems from Aristotle, *On the Soul* (see Commentary 1, 1–3 and Introduction, p. 61).

2, 4–6 *Its dominant part produces what is suitable to itself, while the others are inactive, for they are outside*: Kalligas 2014, 490 (III.4.2.1–6) points out that the citation from the *Phaedrus* (see Commentary 2, 1 and 2–3) "affords P. an opportunity to clarify somewhat his earlier assertion (see 1.3–5) concerning the dominant part of the soul" (*kratoun*). Plotinus speaks about a part that rules (*kratei*) six other times in this treatise (1, 4; 1, 5; 2, 6; 3, 14 and 5, 5). Here, Plotinus suggests that the "ruling" or "dominant part" will dominate, while the other functions of the soul, higher or lower, will be "inactive" and "outside." They (especially the higher powers) will not be "inactive" in a proper sense, but they will not have any effect on the dominant part since the dominant part is focused on itself (see also III.3 [48] 4, 19). On the term "inactive" see also Commentary 3, 5 and Kalligas 2014, 490 (III.4.2.1–6); 126 (I.1.11.2–8).

Lines 6–11

After having discussed soul in all its forms, especially in the vegetative form, in Chapter 1 and at the beginning of Chapter 2, Plotinus turns to human souls. In human beings the rational part is—or at least should be—the ruling part, but the other parts of the soul are present. Since we do have a body and sense-perception, the lower parts of the soul are present; we are not simply the rational soul, and the rational soul may even not always rule, due to the presence of these lower parts of the soul. They can influence what we are and do and therefore divert the focus from rationality. The goal for a human being is, however, to have the rational part as the ruling part.

Lines 11–15

The remainder of Chapter 2 (lines 11–30) treats the fate of soul after death—its possible reincarnations. The first part of this passage is a general statement about what happens to the soul when it departs from the body. In the previous lines, Plotinus had stated that the rational soul does not in fact always rule in the human being. Now, he writes that the soul becomes what it mainly was. He then quotes the famous line from the *Theaetetus* urging us to "escape from earth to the dwelling of the gods as quickly as we can" upward (176a8–176b3). In the *Theaetetus*, Plato speaks of the soul that has to become "righteous and holy

and wise," and Plotinus knows and quotes this passage in I.8 [51] 6, 9–12. But here, he talks about the faculties of sense-perception and growth which endanger the soul if the soul turns toward them. Plato underlines similar dangers in the *Phaedo* (81b1–c7). The goal for the human soul is to "flee" upward toward the Intellect and the One.

2, 11 *it will assume the nature of its predominant aspect* (*epleonase*): *pleonazo* is a *hapax legomenon* in Plotinus; it is not used by Plato at all. When the soul leaves the body, it will become what was predominant in it. If, for instance, a human being does not reinforce rational thought, but sense-perception, he or she will become an animal in the next life.

2, 12 *flee*: See Plato's *Theaetetus* 176a8–176b3, where Plato speaks about the flight of the soul: "Therefore we ought to try to escape from earth to the dwelling of the gods as quickly as we can; and to escape is to become like God, so far as this is possible; and to become like God is to become righteous and holy and wise." Plotinus also speaks about the flight of the soul in other treatises as well. See for instance I.6 [1] 8, 8; 8, 16; I.2 [19] 1, 2–4; I.8 [51] 6, 9–12. On the passages in I.6 [1] see Stock 2013, 500–502, 506–507.

2, 13 *sensible images*: Plotinus speaks of distracting sensible images in other treatises as well (see for instance

I.6 [1] 3, 34). The term *eidôlon* is, however, not necessarily a negative term; it can also denote the lower form of the soul as an image of the soul (see Commentary 3, 25).

2, 14–15 *the desire to procreate and the desire for luxurious food*: Guyot 2003, 353n21 points out that the desire to procreate and the desire for food are both linked to the vegetative soul. See *Republic* VII 519b1–2, where Plato speaks of the bad effect of food, other pleasures, and gluttony on the soul. The term *lichneia* (gluttony) is a *hapax legomenon* both in Plotinus and Plato. *Edôdê* is a *hapax legomenon* in Plotinus as well. See also Plato, *Phaedo* 81e5, where he speaks about gluttony as well, using a different Greek term (*gastrimargia*) and, in general, *Phaedo* 81b1–d4 for the idea of turning away from the body.

2, 15 *to the intelligible and the intellect and god*: The soul is supposed to turn upward to the higher realities, that is, first to "its intellective apprehensions," then to the intellect and finally to god, that is, the One (Kalligas 2014, 490 [III.4.2.11–15]). On the usage of the term "god" for the Intellect and for the One see Commentary 6, 3–4.

Lines 16–30

The last part of Chapter 2 treats the topic of reincarnations for human souls consequent on their current life. Those who emphasized the "human" will become human again

(2, 16). Those who lived on the level of sense-perception will become animals (2, 17–21). If someone lived on an even lower level, he will become a plant (2, 21–24). The last lines (24–30) treat some special cases, that is, human beings who will be reincarnated into animals, but into "better" ones: musical animals, eagles, other high-flying birds, or bees. On the reincarnation of souls in Plotinus see Introduction, pp. 66–70, with further reference to passages in Plotinus, Plato, and secondary literature and with a discussion of the ethical or literal meaning of reincarnation. As I say in my introduction, I assume that Plotinus believes in the physical reality of reincarnation as an animal, even though his main interest in the topic is moral.

2, 16 *human beings again*: Those who care about the "human" will become human again, says Plotinus. This means, of course, that they take care of the specifically human part of the soul, the rational part. In the *Republic*'s simile of the soul, the rational part of the soul is depicted as a human being, whereas the lower parts of the soul resemble a lion and a polycephalic animal; to become just is to support the human being inside (IX 588b10–589b6).

2, 17 *animals*: The soul whose dominant part is sense-perception and not rational thought will be reincarnated on the level on which it lived, that is, as an animal. The following lines explain which kind of animal each soul

becomes. The main passages in Plato for the reincarnation into animals can be found in the *Phaedo*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic*, and the *Timaeus* (see Commentary 2, 16–30). For a detailed discussion of the literal or figurative meaning of the transmigration of souls into animals in Plotinus, see Commentary 2, 16–30 and Introduction, pp. 66–70.

2, 17–18 *If they lived according to sense-perception with anger, wild animals:* See Plato, *Republic* X 620d3–4, where the unjust are turned into wild animals (*agria*), using the same term as Plotinus here. Plotinus uses the term *thumos* (anger) and, in line 19, *epithumia* (desire). These are the two lower parts of the soul in the common Platonic division of the soul. Plotinus combines this division with the Aristotelian division (see Introduction, p. 61). See also Plato, *Phaedo* 82a3–5, which does not mention "anger," but "injustice" and "tyranny" and the subsequent transformation into "wolves, hawks and kites." See also *Timaeus* 91e2–6.

2, 19–21 *Those [who live] with desire and the lust of the desiring part will be licentious and gluttonous animals*: See Plato, *Phaedo* 81e5–82a1, where it is said that those involved in gluttony (*gastrimargia*) will become asses or other such animals. Plotinus uses here the same Greek term for gluttony as Plato.

2, 21–24 *If there is not sense-perception along with these, but only a sluggish level of sense-perception accompanying them, they will become plants. For the vegetative was mostly or only active in them, and they were practicing to be turned into a tree*: Plato does not mention reincarnations into plants, but two fragments of Empedocles mention reincarnations into plants (Fragments B117 and 127; see also Laurent 1999b, 118). Plotinus assumes that human beings can not only live in a way that is similar to that of animals, but on an even lower level that is closer to plants than to animals. The term "sluggish" can be found twice in Plato (*Phaedrus* 235d2 and *Theaetetus* 195c3), both times signifying the stupidity of a mind which has forgotten something or is unable to be persuaded by arguments.

2, 24–25 *Those who love the Muses and are pure in the other respects will become musical [animals]*: In the *Republic* X 620a6–8 the singer Thamyras chooses the life of a nightingale, and a swan and other musical animals are said to choose the life of human beings. The term for "musical" chosen by Plotinus (*ôidika*) is not the same as the one we find in Plato (*mousika*). As Guyot 2003, 354n26 observes, Plotinus may also be referring to a passage in the *Phaedrus* (259b5–c6) where Socrates tells the myth of the locusts who were men who died, since they were so enamored of song and music that they forgot to eat; when they died they were turned into locusts who need

no sustenance. The usage of the term *philomousos* in both texts (a *hapax legomenon* in Plotinus) suggests that Plotinus was indeed thinking of this passage. Plato also uses the term in *Republic* VIII 548e5.

2, 25–26 *Those who are kings without reason will become eagles if they did not exhibit any other evil quality*: Plato does not mention "kings without reason," but the myth of the *Republic* tells the story of a transformation of a king into an eagle: "After him Agamemnon's soul, also through its enmity with the human race because of what it had suffered, made an exchange for the life of an eagle" (X 620b3–5).

2, 26–28 *Astronomers without scientific method who turn always toward the sky will become birds which fly high*: See Plato, *Timaeus* 91d5–e1 where the existence of birds is explained as the result of a transformation of "students of the worlds above" (*meteôrologikoi*), who are "harmless, but light-minded." See Guyot 2003, 354n27; on the term *meteôrologia* see Brisson 2000, 141–150.

2, 28–30 *Those who lived according to political virtue will become human beings. Those who had less part in political virtue will become a social animal, a bee or something like that*: See *Phaedo* 82a10–b8, where Plato mentions that those who practice social virtues without

philosophy will either become human again or turn into a social animal like a bee.

Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 Plotinus turns to the topic of the daimôn*. Plotinus distinguishes between the* daimôn *one can become and the* daimôn *one has. He defines the latter as the inactive level above the active level we live on. If we live on the level of rational thought, it is the intellect, and if we live on the level of sense-perception, it is the rational soul. This definition of the* daimôn*, which diverges considerably from Platonic sources, can be easily combined with the idea expressed in the Republic that we "choose" our* daimôn*. However, it is more difficult to explain how this* daimôn *could "lead" the soul. In the last part of the chapter Plotinus turns back to the topic of the soul, stating that "we" are an "intelligible universe." The connection between the intelligible universe and the world-soul on the one hand and our soul on the other will become important in Chapter 6.*

Lines 1–3

After having given a list of different reincarnations (humans, animals, plants) at the end of Chapter 2 (2,

16–30), Plotinus now asks who becomes a *daimôn* or a god. His answer is that someone will become a *daimôn* if one is a *daimôn* already here, that is, if one activates the higher faculties of the soul and lives a life even beyond the rational level. The dominant principle is said to guide (*agei*) and lead (*hêgoumenon*), both in this life and after death. Therefore, the sage who already lives according to a higher principle than the rational principle and is therefore already a *daimôn* or a god will become one after death.

3, 1–2 *Who, then, [becomes] a daimôn? He who was one here. And who a god? He who was one here*: Like Armstrong, Guyot, Faggin, Ferwerda, Gerson, Igal, Kalligas, and Radice/Reale, I decided to add the verb "become" and not "is" (Harder: "Und was ist das für ein 'Daimon'?"; MacKenna; Müller), or "guide" ("mène"; Bréhier), since this passage develops from the last part of Chapter 2, where Plotinus enumerates possible reincarnations. After having asked who becomes a human being, an animal or a plant, he now asks who *becomes* a *daimôn* or a god after death. Therefore it is not correct that there is no "relation" between Chapter 2 and the beginning of Chapter 3, as Timotin thinks (Timotin 2012, 288, 293). Very often, in the *Enneads*, the term god denotes either Intellect or the One (see Commentary 6, 3–4), but here the term must be understood differently, probably in the sense of a plurality

of gods as there is a plurality of *daimones* (on the plurality of higher lives see Commentary 6, 3–4; 19–30).

See Plato, *Phaedo* 82b10–c1 on the idea of philosophers entering the race of the gods in the next life; *Theaetetus* 176a8–176b3 on the idea of purifying oneself and becoming like god, and *Cratylus* on becoming or being a *daimôn*: "This, then, I think, is what he certainly means to say of the daemons: because they were wise and knowing (*daêmones*) he called them daemons, and in the old form of our language the two words are the same. Now he and all the other poets are right, who say that when a good man dies he has a great portion and honor among the dead, and becomes a daemon, a name which is in accordance with the other name of wisdom. And so I assert that every good man, whether living or dead, is of daemonic nature, and is rightly called a daemon" (398b5–c4; Fowler, slightly revised).

On becoming a god or a *daimôn* see also I.2 [19] 6, 2–7: "Our concern, though, is not to be out of sin, but to be god. If, then, there is still any element of involuntary impulse of this sort, a man in this state will be a god or a *daimôn* who is double, or rather, who has with him someone else who possesses a different kind of virtue: if there is nothing, he will be simply god, and one of those gods who follow the First" (Armstrong, slightly revised). (On becoming god, see also VI.9 [9] 9, 58.) Timotin refers to Hesiod's myth to the effect that the one who always lives

on the highest level will become a *daimôn* (Timotin 2012, 306). Plotinus will come back to the sage in Chapter 6, 1–4.

3, 2 *that part of everyone*: A couple of editors and translators (Armstrong, Harder, Kirchhoff, Müller, and *Addenda*) have *hekaston* instead of the *lectio difficilior hekastou* (HS_1, HS_2; Ferwerda, Guyot) which I am following. Note: TLG has *hekaston,* despite the fact that they say that their text is HS_1.

Lines 3–8

After having considered the *daimôn* that a human being *is* or can *become* (lines 1–3), Plotinus moves to the *daimôn* someone *has*. This distinction goes back to Pythagorean thinking (see Detienne 1963, 58–59; Guyot 2003, 355n31). He introduces this topic by asking whether this *daimôn* he has just described is the *daimôn* who received us as a lot while we lived (from Plato's *Phaedo*). Plotinus responds in the negative, explaining that the *daimôn* (mentioned in the *Phaedo*) is the inactive part of the soul above the part that is active. If the sensitive part is the active part, the *daimôn* is the rational part; if the rational part is active, it is what is beyond, that is, the intellect. Proclus directly criticizes this theory in his *Commentary on the First Alcibiades* (see Introduction, pp. 105–109).

3, 3–4 *Is this, then, "the daimôn to whom he was allotted while he lived"?*: See Plato, *Phaedo* 107d5–8: "The story goes like this: When each individual has died, the spirit of each one that he was allotted when he was alive (*ho hekastou daimôn hosper zônta eilêchei*) undertakes to lead (*agein*) him to some spot where those who are gathered together are compelled to submit themselves to judgment." See on this notion Commentary on the title of the treatise and Kalligas 2014, 488 (III.4, note on the title, with further references). Cf. also Lysias (*Epitaphios* 2), 78, line 4–79, line 1: "But we see not only that our nature yields to sickness and old age, but that the spirit (*daimôn*) to whom has been allotted the charge of our fate is inexorable."

3, 5 *presides*: Plotinus uses this notion a couple of times in the *Enneads*, for instance in I.1 [53] 7, 18 where "we" are said to preside over the living being. Similarly, in III.2 [47] 2, 40 the soul is said to preside over the mixture (see also III.2 [47] 7, 27); in IV.3 [27] 9, 34 soul presides over that which it forms. In VI.8 [39] 4, 18 something bad stands over the soul and enslaves it, but virtue wants to supervise soul to make it good (VI.8 [39] 6, 8). In neither of these cases, though, is the "presiding" level said to be inactive. See also below Commentary 3, 7.

3, 5 *inactive*: A similar idea to the one presented here can be found in III.5 [50], where Plotinus presents the

idea that every soul has an *erôs*, but that some leave this *daimôn* inactive (*argos*) and act (*energountas*) according to another *daimôn* whom they chose according to the part which is active in their souls (III.5 [50] 7, 30–36). According to this theory, every soul has a certain *daimôn*, that is, *erôs*, but many fail to live according to it, but live on a different level which is in accordance with another *daimôn*. This second *daimôn* is described in a very similar way to the *daimôn* here in III.4 [15].

On the term "inactive" see also above 2, 6 (the distinction between the active principle in the soul and other inactive principles); I.1 [53] 11, 2 (the higher principle is inactive toward us); III.3 [48] 4, 17 (the higher principles are not inactive in themselves); V.1 [10] 12, 2 (the One and the Intellect are in us, but we rarely activate these activities); VI.4 [22] 14, 30 (when the higher is inactive); VI.7 [38] 13, 50; VI.9 [9] 10, 5 (not to activate contemplation). Higher principles—and therefore also the *daimôn*—are never inactive in a proper sense; their activity never ceases, but it depends on "us," as the conscious center of the soul, to activate them. If "we" do not activate this higher level, one may say that they are "inactive." (On the "puzzle of inactive faculties" see also Adamson 2017, 267–270.)

3, 7 *what presides over it*: what presides over the rational part is the intellect. In Plato's *Timaeus*, we do not find a distinction between the rational part and the intellect:

the *daimôn* as the highest part of the soul (90a2–7) is the rational part or the intellect. Plotinus, however, distinguishes between the rational part and the intellect (see for instance V.3 [49] 3, 1–49; I.1 [53] 1, 7–9).

3, 7–8 *inactive, giving assent to the working part*: The *daimôn* is said to be "inactive," but to give "assent to the working part." The tutelary spirits in the *Phaedo* and in the *Republic* assume active roles (leading, guardian, overseer), but these active functions are difficult to integrate into Plotinus' theory, in which the conscious center, and not the *daimôn*, determines the course. Plotinus, however, wants to interpret Plato and therefore does not completely abandon some of the traditional roles of the *daimôn*.

Lines 8–10

Plotinus' definition of the *daimôn* as the inactive level above the level we live on can easily be combined with the idea of the choice of the *daimôn* in Plato's *Republic*. Since we decide what our active part is, we thereby also choose the inactive part beyond it. Therefore, Plotinus says, it is said correctly that we choose our *daimôn* as specified in the myth of Er in Plato's *Republic*; the "responsibility is the chooser's," as Plato says (*Republic* X 617e4–5; quoted by Plotinus in III.2 [47] 7, 19–20). The idea of a choice of the *daimôn* is an innovation of Plato's *Republic*, in contrast to the common idea of a *daimôn* to whom we

are allotted (see Commentary 3, 8–9). For Plotinus, this idea is essential, since he wants to underline the soul's responsibility for its own life.

3, 8–9 *that "it is we who choose"*: See Plato, *Republic* X 617e1–2: "No *daimôn* shall obtain you by lot, but you shall choose your *daimôn* (*oukh hymas daimôn lêxetai, all' hymeis daimona hairêsesthe*)" (my own translation). The lines in Plato's *Republic* seem to correct Plato's *Phaedo* (107d5–8). However, in the *Republic,* this same *daimôn*, whom we are said to choose (X 617e1–2), is said to be sent as the "guardian" and "fulfiller": "she gave each the *daimôn* they had chosen (*hon eileto daimona*) to escort them as guardian (*phulaka*) through their lives and as fulfiller (*apoplêrôtên*) of their choices" (Plato, *Republic* X 620d8–e1; Emlyn-Jones/Preddy, slightly revised). Plato's innovation of the choice of the *daimôn* underlines the fact that human beings are responsible for their choice of life and cannot blame god or fate. Plotinus' solution emphasizes the responsibility even more (see Commentary 5, 1–4). On the choice of the *daimôn* see also below 5, 1; 5, 8; 5, 25; 6, 12 and III.5 [50] 7, 30–36 (quoted above in Commentary 3, 5).

Lines 10–20

After having given a definition of the *daimôn* in the previous lines, Plotinus now asks the first of many questions

he takes from Plato. His aim is to reconcile Plato's various and contradictory statements about the *daimôn*. This first question stems from the *Phaedo,* where the *daimôn* is said to "guide" the soul after death to judgment (107d5–8). Kalligas describes this passage as "opaque" (Kalligas 2014, 492 [III.4.3.10–14]), and it is indeed complicated, since the definition of the *daimôn* as the *inactive* level cannot easily be reconciled with the Platonic *daimôn* who guides (*agei*) the soul (the same passage from Plato causes trouble in Chapter 6 as well; see Commentary 6, 10–17).

In the first part of his answer (lines 10–13), Plotinus writes that "the [principle which guided] man while he lived" cannot guide now, although it guided before during life; now it supplies its activity to another. This statement seems to contradict what Plotinus said at the beginning of Chapter 3: "For that part of everyone which was active will guide [after death] since it is leading here" (3, 2–3). At the beginning of Chapter 3, Plotinus underlines the idea that someone will be reincarnated according to the currently active part of the soul, for instance, someone whose active part is the sensitive soul will become an animal. In this sense what is leading now will lead then. Here, I assume, Plotinus is interested in a different aspect: the possibility of ascent and descent. The one who has finished living does not, in my view, denote just the active part of the human being (as Kristeller 1931, 59 thinks), but

the human being as a whole; its *daimôn* cannot guide after death, but has to hand over the activity to another.

Then, Plotinus writes that the *daimôn* "wants to guide," and that, "when it rules, lives itself, and it has another as a *daimôn*." The idea of a *daimôn* of a *daimôn* may sound bizarre; but since the *daimôn* is nothing more than the inactive level above the active level, the *daimôn* is part of the soul. And if the *daimôn* takes command and lives, he is no longer the inactive level, but has become the active level; therefore, the part above him is the new *daimôn*. It is especially this sentence which shows that the *daimôn* in this sense is by no means "an extrapersonal entity" (so Kalligas 2014, 492 [III.4.3.10–14]; see also 492 [III.4.3.14–20]). If, for instance, someone whose active level is the sensitive soul, and who therefore has the rational soul as *daimôn,* purifies his soul, his rational soul will become active and the new *daimôn* will be the intellect. This ascent can go on "up to the higher world." The *daimôn* is not an extrapersonal being, but simply the next level of the soul above the level that is active. Since man can ascend and activate a higher level, the level of the *daimôn* will shift accordingly. Sliding downward is also possible: man can activate a lower level, be weighed down, and become a beast. The matching level of the *daimôn* will switch accordingly. In his choice of words,

Plotinus alludes to the *Phaedrus* where the worse horse weighs down the chariot of the soul.

3, 10 *guides*: Plato, *Phaedo* 107d5–8 (see Commentary 3, 3–4).

3, 15 *burdened*: The term "burdened" (*barunoito*) stems from Plato. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 248c2–d2: "And this is a law of Destiny, that the soul which follows after God and obtains a view of any of the truths is free from harm until the next period, and if it can always attain this, is always unharmed; but when, through inability to follow, it fails to see, and through some mischance is filled with forgetfulness and evil and grows heavy (*barunthêi*), and when it has grown heavy (*baruntheisa*), loses its wings and falls to the earth, then it is the law that this soul shall never pass into any beast at its first birth." Plato then gives a list of possible incarnations. Plato, *Phaedo* 81c8–d4: "And you must suppose, my friend, that this corporeal element is weighty and heavy (*baru*), earthy and visible. Indeed such a soul that has this is weighed down (*barunetai*) and dragged back to the visible world by fear of both the invisible and Hades, so it's said, circling aimlessly among the tombstones and graves, among which indeed some shadowy apparitions of souls have actually been seen, the kind of images that such souls produce that have not been released in a pure state, but having a share in the visible

can thus be seen." See also Plato, *Phaedrus* 247b3–5 (see Commentary 3, 16: *weighed down*). See also Plato, *Republic* VII 519a8–b3, where Plato speaks of the soul that could be freed from the leaden weight (the terminology is different, but the idea similar). Plotinus uses the term a couple of times in a similar sense: V.9 [5] 1, 8–10 (the souls that are like heavy birds who are weighed down); VI.9 [9] 5, 59 (being weighed down away from the union); IV.3 [27] 15, 5–7 (the souls that are weighed down and pass from body to body).

3, 15–16 *punishment*: In VI.4 [22] 16, 1–4 Plotinus asks about the meaning of the "descents" and the "judgments" and the "entries into the bodies of other animals" if the nature of the soul itself is not evil. Plotinus raises the same issue in I.1 [53] 12, 1–4 where he writes: "But if the soul is sinless, how is it judged? This line of thought disagrees with all the arguments which maintain that the soul sins and acts rightly and undergoes punishment, punishment in Hades, and passes from body to body." Both passages show that the idea of punishments in Hades is difficult for Plotinus to integrate into his system. As one solution he proposes that the weighing down itself is the punishment, here in III.4 [15], but also in other treatises. In Chapter 5 of IV.8 [6] Plotinus tries to combine the idea of the coming forth of the soul with the punishment as well, and mentions the idea that the punishment of the descent of the soul consists in the experience of the descent itself

(IV.8 [6] 5, 16–19; see also II.3 [52] 8, 11–12). According to Guyot, Ficino used this idea to point out that no reincarnation is necessary for punishment of sins (Guyot 2003, 356–357n41).

3, 16 *weighed down*: The term "weighed down" (*brisantos*) stems from Plato. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 247b3–5: "for the horse of evil nature weighs (*brithei*) the chariot down, making it heavy and pulling toward the earth (*barunôn*) the charioteer whose horse is not well trained." See also Commentary 3, 15. Plotinus uses the word one more time in the *Enneads*, in treatise IV.3 [27] 13, 30 where he speaks about the soul's coming to be; the souls get "a sort of weight in them" and "a birth pang of desire." The whole description in Chapter 13 of IV.3 does not describe the coming to be as a fall, but rather as a coming forth.

3, 16–17 *wild beast:* On this topic see above 2, 17–21 and below 6, 18.

3, 18–20 *if a man . . . higher world*: Timotin refers to III.5 [50] 7, 32–33 and writes that one could change the *daimôn* in the course of one life (Timotin 2012, 300). However, in III.4 [15] Plotinus also mentions the idea that one does not change one's *daimôn* (5, 9). Since Plotinus seems to be trying to reconcile Platonic positions in this treatise, I assume that he would not contradict the Platonic assumption that a *daimôn* is allotted for one life

and can only be changed for the next life. See also Hadot 1990, 228 on different interpretations based on the rendering of *kat' allon kai allon* in III.5: (1) the "distributive sense" according to which everyone has chosen their own *daimôn*, and the "successive sense" according to which one changes from one *daimôn* to the next, either during one life (2) or in successive reincarnations (3). Hadot argues for interpretation (1) for III.5. Here, in III.4, interpretation (3) seems more likely, since Plotinus discusses the ascent of the soul to the higher world.

3, 20 *setting in charge*: *prostasia* is a *hapax legomenon* in the *Enneads*. Plotinus uses the word *prostatês* once for the intellect presiding over the intelligible cosmos (V.1 [10] 4, 8). Guyot thinks that Stoic ideas could have been influential: Marcus Aurelius uses *prostatês* for the *daimôn*/intellect (*Meditations* III, 5 and V, 27; see Guyot 2003, 357n44).

Lines 21–27

Plotinus now switches back to the topic of the soul and of what "we" are, which is, however, closely linked to that of the *daimôn*. Soul is manifold; it reaches from the intelligible realm down to the limits of what is alive, that is, from the intellect down to the vegetative soul. Furthermore, Plotinus writes, "we" are an "intelligible universe," that in "us" too, there are all these functions of the soul, from

the highest to the lowest. Therefore, "we" are connected to the intelligible universe itself. This idea will become important in the last chapter of the treatise.

3, 21–22 *soul is manifold and everything, the above and the below as far as there is life*: Soul is "a rich, complex unity capable of existing on many levels and operating in many ways, which can be distinguished but must not be separated" (Armstrong 1966–1988, III, 150–151n1). Aristotle states, in *On the Soul* (III, 431b21), that soul is all beings (*ta onta panta*). See Guyot 2003, 357n45; Kalligas 2014, 492 (III.4.3.21–24). Soul belongs to the intelligible realm and comes forth from the Intellect, but it also reaches down into the material world with its lowest level, the vegetative soul (see Introduction, pp. 61–63 and Commentary 1, 3). Similar ideas can, for instance, be found in V.2 [11] 1, 22–28: "Nothing is separated or cut off from that which is before it. For this reason the higher soul seems to reach as far as plants; and in a way it does reach so far, for the life-principle in plants belongs to it; it is certainly not all in plants, but it has come to be in plants in the sense that it has extended itself down to their level, and produced another degree of being by that extension, in desire of its inferior. The part before this, which is immediately dependent on Intellect, leaves Intellect alone, abiding in itself"; III.8 [30] 5, 9–17: "The

first part of soul, then, that which is above and always filled and illuminated by the reality above, remains there; but another part, participating by the first participation of the participant goes forth, for soul goes forth always, life from life; for actuality reaches everywhere, and there is no point where it fails. But in going forth it lets its prior part remain where it left it, for if it abandoned what is before it, it would no longer be everywhere, but only at the last point it reached. But what goes forth is not equal to what remains."

3, 22 *intelligible universe*: According to Plato's *Timaeus* human souls are formed from the same ingredients as the world-soul, just in lesser purity (41d4–7); and human souls are encouraged to imitate the form of the All and assimilate themselves to the world-soul (88c7–d1; 90c6–d7). Plotinus develops this Platonic idea of the similarity of our soul to the world-soul into the idea that we are an "intelligible universe." He defends his famous thesis that our soul does not descend completely (see especially IV.8 [6] 8, 1–3) and the idea that the One, Intellect, and Soul are present in ourselves (V.1 [10] 10, 5–6); even when our soul descends, it does not lose the connection to its origin, and it can, therefore, ascend through its own powers. The idea of a *kosmos noêtos* can already be found in Numenius who is, according to Iamblichus, among the philosophers who assume that there is "an intelligible

universe in every individual soul, the gods, the daemons, the Good and all the higher principles"; Numenius supports this view, Iamblichus writes, and Plotinus to a certain degree (Numenius, *Fragments* 41 [my translation]). Later Neoplatonists criticized Plotinus for this idea (Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides* 134A [V, p. 948, 14–20; ed. Cousin 1864]; Armstrong 1966–1988, III, 150–151n1; see also Henry 1938, 220–221; Guyot 2003, 357–358n47). On the idea of the *kosmos noêtos* see also below 6, 22–23, Commentary 6, 19–30 and Introduction, pp. 70–72.

3, 24 *remain above*: The soul does not descend entirely. See Commentary 3, 22: *intelligible universe*.

3, 25 *outflow*: In order to explain how the lower levels of reality come to be from the higher levels, Plotinus sometimes uses the notion of *aporrhoia*, of "outflow" or "emanation" (see for instance II.1 [40] 5, 5–8; III.2 [47] 2, 15–18). A source for this term might be Plato's *Phaedrus* (251b2: *aporrhoê*) (see Kalligas 2014, 376 [II.9.3.7–12]; Guyot 2003, 358n49). As Kalligas rightly points out, the term is not unproblematic, and Plotinus himself shows some reserve (Kalligas 2014, 261 [II.1.5.5–14]; 376 [II.9.3.7–12]; 449 [III.2.2.15–18]; Kalligas 2000, 31–34; with further references and passages; see also Armstrong 1979a; Dörrie 1976). In this specific instance, Plotinus speaks about our outflow toward what is lower, that is, toward the vegetative

soul (in other texts he uses the image of an "image of the soul" to describe this lower function of the soul; see for instance VI.4 [22] 16, 39–44 and I.1 [53] 11, 12; 12, 23–34 and Dillon 2013; Stock 2016b and Tornau 2016).

3, 26 *activity*: Plotinus corrects the usage of the term "outflow" in line 25 by the notion of *energeia*. On the notion of activity see Kalligas 2014, 109 (I.2.2.7–9) and Rutten 1956. In IV.8 [6] Plotinus also speaks of *energeia* in the context of the descent of the soul. The unfolding of the capacities in the intellect is called *energeia*, as is the procession of the soul into the sensible realm (see for instance IV.8 [6] 5, 28–36; 6, 6–10). Armstrong thinks that Plotinus is deviating from his own theory in IV.8 (Armstrong 1940, 61–63; 84; cf. also Trouillard 1955, 3), but I do not think that Plotinus' thoughts on *dunamis* and *energeia* in IV.8 are "unplotinian" (see Stock 2016a).

3, 27 *suffer a loss*: The fact that something comes to be from a higher level of reality does not mean that the higher level suffers a loss. When soul comes to be from Intellect, the activity of Intellect in itself remains the same (see III.8 [30] 8, 46–48). Similarly, the soul does not suffer a loss when the vegetative soul comes from it. For a similar idea, yet with a different terminology, see Plato, *Symposium* 211b4: Participation does not diminish the participated.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 continues the general discussion about soul, especially about the vegetative principle and the world-soul. "It seems at first sight to be an awkward digression on the topic of the world-soul" (Adamson 2017, 269), but is in fact relevant as a discussion of idle powers that might become active (Adamson 2017, 267–270). Plotinus does not consider it as a comprehensive discussion of the cosmos, but writes that all that had to be said regarding the current topic had been said. The connection of the two topics becomes evident in the following chapters (especially in Chapter 6) where Plotinus underlines the connection between our soul and the world-soul.

Lines 1–2

The first two lines are the conclusion of the last passage in Chapter 3. Plotinus enquires whether this part, that is, the vegetative principle, always remains in the body, and responds that it will turn when "we" turn. Two interpretations of the passage seem possible. Plotinus either speaks of the turning of the soul toward Intellect and the One during life or of the final turning away of the soul at death. Kalligas 2014, 493 (III.4.4.1–2) is in favor of the first interpretation: "Without ceasing to 'illuminate' the body

and so endow it with life, the soul is no longer bothered or concerned with it, now that the body merely 'depends upon and is attached to us,' but causes us no troubles, worries, or affections; cf. IV.4.18.6–21." The second interpretation suggests that the vegetative principle remains in the body as long as the soul stays with the body and turns it into a living being; at death, when the higher soul turns away entirely, the vegetative principle leaves the body as well. Plotinus discusses a similar issue in I.1 [53] 10, 1–11; 12, 28–31, where he speaks about the *eidôlon* of the soul. As Plotinus opposes the case of the world-soul to our case in the next sentence, I assume that the second interpretation is correct. According to the first interpretation, "we" would be like the world-soul.

Lines 2–7

Plotinus now addresses the topic of the world-soul. The question whether "its [lowest] part" will "also be separated when it turns" suggests that Plotinus' presentation is a little elliptical here since he had only spoken of "our" lower part turning when "we" turn, and not of a separation. A separation of the lower part of the soul from the body occurs at death, that is, when the higher soul turns away from the body entirely, and not just during the life of a human being. Plotinus now wants to know whether something similar happens to the world-soul. The answer

Plotinus gives does not seem to follow directly; again the text seems rather elliptical. Plotinus writes that the world-soul does not "incline with its lowest part"; it remains up in its contemplation, and the body is "illuminated" by it without causing any trouble to the world-soul or necessitating any active care.

4, 2–3 *the soul of the All*: See Introduction, pp. 59–61.

4, 4 *incline*: The word Plotinus uses here (*sunneuô*) is not exactly the same as in his discussions with the Gnostics, where he employs the term *neuô* (for instance II.9 [33] 10, 19), but the general idea is the same.

4, 5–6 *the body of the cosmos is attached to it*: See Plato, *Timaeus* 36d8–e1 on the combining of the world-soul and the world-body. The body of the world does not attach itself to the world-soul in Plato. Therefore, I follow Guyot ("est en contact avec elle"; similarly Faggin) and translate *proshaptetai* as a passive voice. Armstrong translates "attaches itself"; Kalligas opts for the same translation and so does MacKenna ("draws close to it"); similarly Igal. Radice diverges from the Greek text.

4, 6 *illuminated*: On the idea of illumination of the body by the soul, see for instance VI.4 [22] 3, 19–23; IV.3 [27] 17, 8–12; 17, 18–21; II.9 [33] 2, 12–18; 3, 1–5; 3, 18–21; 11, 1–11; I.1 [53] 8, 15–23; 11, 14; 12, 24–28. See also I.8 [51]

14, 38–39: "So matter spreads itself out under soul and is illumined, and cannot grasp the source from which its light comes." The preceding lines are a parallel to the words "cause trouble" in line 6 (see Commentary 4, 6: *cause trouble*).

4, 6 *cause trouble*: On the verb "cause trouble" (*enochloun*) see VI.9 [9] 10, 3; II.9 [33] 8, 35–36; I.4 [46] 14, 24. An interesting parallel passage is I.8 [51] 14, 35–36: "and matter is there, and begs it and, we may say, bothers it and wants to come right inside." See also Commentary 4, 6: *illuminated*.

4, 7 *produce care*: On the term "care" (*merimna*) see also IV.3 [27] 4, 32, where Plotinus compares the higher parts of our soul to a gardener who is concerned about maggots in a plant and has to take care of it, and VI.9 [9] 10, 3–7 (see Guyot 2003, 358n54).

4, 7 *in what is unchanging*: See, on the same idea, IV.3 [27] 6, 22. For a similar opposition of the human body and the cosmos see IV.8 [6] 2, 12–15 and 8, 17–21.

Lines 7–10

Plotinus inquires about the world-soul's sense-perception and responds that it does not perceive because it has no sense organs.

4, 9 *he says*: Plotinus refers to Plato's *Timaeus* 33c1–3. As Guyot 2003, 359n56 remarks, this opinion was not shared by all Platonic scholars.

Lines 10–13

The world-soul has no sense-perceptions (as established in lines 7–10), nor does it have self-consciousness or pleasure. Both the vegetative principle and the principle of sense-perception are "present without being present."

4, 10 *self-consciousness*: The term *sunaisthesis* comes up in a couple of other treatises as well; see for instance IV.4 [28] 2, 31; 8, 20; 45, 8; IV.5 [29] 5, 29; V.1 [10] 7, 12 (of Intellect having consciousness of its powers); V.3 [49] 13, 13; V.4 [7] 2, 18 (about the One: "as if"); V.6 [24] 5, 2–5 (about the One being above self-consciousness); see also V.3 [49] 13, 20–21: "For self-consciousness is a consciousness of something which is many, even the name bears witness to this." Armstrong 1966–1988, V, 118n1 writes about this passage: "The reference is to the *sun-* of *sunaisthesis* which is not literally translatable into English. At the beginning of his writing period Plotinus does not see this reference to multiplicity in *sunaisthesis* and uses it of the One (with an "as if"): cp. V. 4. 2. 18." In III.8 [30] 4, 15–25, Plotinus speaks about "nature," "a soul, the offspring of a prior soul" which "quietly holds contemplation in itself." He attributes "consciousness" (*sunesis*) and

"self-perception" (*sunaisthesis*) to it, but then clarifies: "If anyone wants to attribute to it understanding (*sunesis*) or perception (*aisthesis*), it will not be the understanding or perception we speak of in other beings; it will be like comparing the consciousness of someone fast asleep to the consciousness of someone awake." See also I.1 [53] 11, 8–12: "If as it is said there are sinful human souls in them [that is, the beasts], the separable part of the soul does not come to belong to the beasts but is there without being there for them; their consciousness includes the image of the soul and the body." In this passage in I.1 Plotinus uses the same expression of "being present without being present" as in 4, 12 (see Commentary 4, 12). On the topic of consciousness see also Schroeder 1987; Smith 1978; Stern-Gillet 2006; Warren 1964.

4, 11 *calm*: The noun *êremêsis* is a *hapax legomenon* in Plotinus; Plato never uses it; and it is not a common word. Aristotle uses it several times, usually as the opposite term of motion or change (*On the Soul* I, 406b22–23; I 407a32; *Metaphysics* V 2, 1013a30; XI 1, 1068b7; *Physics* II 3, 194b30). Guyot 2003, 359n57 chooses a punctuation different from HS_2, that is, a colon after *echontôn* and no stop after *êremêsis*, resulting in the following translation: "Non, il lui arrive la même chose qu'à ceux qui sont dans un état conforme à la nature: le calme, pas même le plaisir."

4, 12 *present without being present*: See IV.3 [27] 17, 28–31: "But if every living creature was like the All, a perfect and sufficient body and in no danger of suffering, then the soul which is said to be present would not be present in it, and would give it life while remaining altogether in the upper world." See also VI.4 [22] 3, 6–11; I.1 [53] 11, 11 (quoted in Commentary 4, 10). See Adamson 2017.

Lines 13–14

In the last two lines of Chapter 4, Plotinus states that he will deal with the cosmos elsewhere, and that he has said all about it that is connected to the current topic.

4, 14 *elsewhere*: Plotinus speaks about the cosmos in treatises II.9 [33], II.1 [40], and III.2 [47].

Chapter 5

In Chapter 5 Plotinus returns to the topic of the daimôn*, and he raises a series of questions suggested by Plato's statements about the* daimôn*. The first main issue stems from the* Republic*. Since the myth suggest that the choice of life is made before the embodiment, it seems unclear how the souls could have any power in this life. Plotinus responds*

to this challenge by interpreting the mythical choice as a general disposition of the soul. The second great challenge comes from the Timaeus *and its account of the* daimôn *as the intellect; Plotinus merely focuses on the question of whether the* daimôn *is internal or external, and he leaves aside the definition as the intellect which cannot be directly reconciled with his own theory. The final issue comes from the* Republic*, where the* daimôn *is defined as the "fulfiller" of the soul's choice, and Plotinus has to explain again (as in Chapter 3) what this "active" role could mean when the* daimôn *is conceived of as "inactive."*

Lines 1–4

The *Republic* has provided Plotinus a concrete if not coherent account of the relations of soul and *daimôn* and ordinary human life. After their rewards or punishments, the souls choose their new life, and then they are reincarnated and have to live this life. If, before the reincarnation, they choose a life with all its ingredients (the tyrant who is going to eat his children, *Republic* X 619b7–c6), it is unclear how they could possibly have a choice once they started living this life. Plato clearly ascribes the responsibility to the soul that chooses: "god is not to be blamed (*Republic* X 617e5). But since he writes, "Let the one who draws the first lot be the first to choose a life to which he will adhere of necessity" (*Republic* X 617e2–3), the life seems

altogether determined once a soul has made its choice. Furthermore, the *daimôn* is described as the "fulfiller" of the soul's choice (X 620e1); then it "led it first toward Clotho, under her hand and the spinning of the whirling spindle, ratifying the fate it had chosen by lot. After receiving her touch it again led the soul toward Atropos' spinning, which made the assignment irreversible. And then, without turning round, it went beneath the throne of Necessity" (X 620e2–621a1). The "idea that each soul makes an irrevocable choice about its next life already in the hiatus beforehand has disturbing implications for human autonomy" (Adamson 2017, 273; see also Annas 1982, 133–134). So can someone change their course of life? The myth seems to deny it, but Socrates' exhortation to philosophy implies that someone can better their lot in this life here (see Adamson 2017, 261–262; Destrée 2014). In his interpretation, Plotinus clearly wants to avoid any determinism which would acquit the soul of its responsibility in this life. He therefore reads the myth as a "riddling statement" referring to a general "resolution and disposition of the soul." The Platonic myth is seen as a "riddle" designed to be deciphered and read correctly (see Commentary 5, 4). Plotinus' interpretation of the choice in the afterlife transfers this choice into this life. The soul does not choose once, in the world beyond, but there is a general choice, disposition and resolution of the soul to live a certain life. Plotinus' emphasis on the

reiteration of choice opens up the possibility of change, and it underscores the fact that the soul is responsible for its own life in this very life, now and for the entire course of this life (see also Adamson 2017, 267, 272).

5, 1–2 *if it is there [in the other world] that the soul makes the choice of its* daimôn *and [its future] life*: See Plato, *Republic* X 617d2–621a1 (for the whole story of the choice of the lives); see especially: 617e1–2 (choice of *daimôn* and choice of life; see Commentary 3, 8–9).

5, 2 *power*: Plotinus uses this term (*kurios*) in his discussions about free will and choice along with terms like *eph'hêmin* and *hêkousion*. See especially treatise III.1 [3] and VI.8 [39]. See Eliasson 2008, who analyzes the term *eph'hêmin* in Plotinus' *Enneads*, and Gerson 2014.

5, 3 *resolution*: There is some dispute about whether Plotinus uses this notion (*prohairesis*) in an Aristotelian, a Stoic, or a Platonic way. Guyot underlines the Stoic elements without neglecting Aristotle (see for instance Guyot 2003, 359n60); Kristeller and Gollwitzer point to Aristotle's definition of the term. Phillips argues that Plotinus' notion is not to be explained through Aristotle or the Stoics, but goes back to Plato's *hairesis* in the *Republic* (Phillips 1995, 139). See also ibid., 140–141n21, where he criticizes Gollwitzer and Kristeller for their Aristotelian explanation.

Aristotle uses the term both in the *Eudemian* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The definition he advances in book III of the *Nicomachean Ethics* regards *prohairesis* as a decision or resolution in the process of action (see for instance *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 1113a10–11; VI, 1139a23; see also *Eudemian Ethics* II, 10. See Aubenque 1963, 119; Guyot 2003, 359n60). The second meaning can be found in the definition of moral virtue as *hexis prohairetikê*, as a disposition concerning the resolution or intention (see for instance *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 1106b36; see Aubenque 1963, 119–120). The first meaning is certainly not what we find in Plotinus here, but the second usage seems to have a certain similarity to Plotinus' intention (see Guyot 2003, 359n60).

In the early Stoics *prohairesis* is seen as "an initial choice that decides forever the moral quality of an individual" (Guyot 2003, 359n60; my translation); it is defined in the following way: "Resolution is the choice before choice" (*prohairesin de hairesin pro haireseôs*) (SVF III, 173). In the sense that *prohairesis* defines the whole life this is similar to Plotinus (so Guyot 2003, 359n60). However, in Plotinus we do not have the idea of an "initial choice," but of a reaffirming and reiterating of a general choice. In Epictetus *prohairesis* is seen as "the distinctive function of a person" since it is the function through which we position ourselves toward reality (Brisson and Pradeau 2002, 130–131n42; my translation).

Phillips wants to prove that Plotinus' idea of *prohairesis* is neither Aristotelian nor Stoic. He writes that "*prohairesis* and *diathesis* are associated with the character (*êthos*) of soul that preexists its descent into body. More specifically, *prohairesis* is the 'whole' purpose (*tên holên prohairesin*) of soul unaffected by the contingencies of its empirical life (14); it is the ruling principle (*to kurion*) which determines the kind of life it will have" (Phillips 1995, 140). He thinks of a "universal, permanent, and pre-established purpose or intention of the undescended soul, that, at least in the context of Plotinus' discussion of the descent of soul, is partially determinative of the level of intellectual and empirical activity it will have after its embodiment" (Phillips 1995, 141); it "denotes some sort of metaphysical purpose or intention belonging to the higher phase of each soul and directed away from empirical activity of the lower phase toward contemplation of the Good; this is what Plotinus means in iii.4.5.14 by the 'whole purpose' of the soul that is unaffected by external circumstances" (Phillips 1995, 141). "Here, then, Plotinus makes explicit what is implied in III.4.5 and IV.3.13, that we are to regard Plato's *hairesis biôn*, or simply *prohairesis*, as an enigmatic allusion to the timeless, conditionless 'purpose' of his own higher, undescended soul. Thus for Plotinus *prohairesis* is closely associated with—perhaps even identified with—soul's impassible contemplative activity transcending the conditioned experience of the

lower phase of soul, and, as activity shared by divine and human souls alike, it forms one component of his theory of the interrelationship of all souls" (Phillips 1995, 142). Similarly, Rist 1974 thinks that *prohairesis* cannot "sin" since Plotinus never uses the word in the context of the fall of the soul; according to Rist the *prohairesis* "is, as it were, put to sleep" when the lower soul falls (Rist 1974, 117). Kalligas' rightly points out that *prohairesis* "corresponds [. . .] with the mythical 'choice' (*hairesis*) of lives" and "cannot be identified with the undescended soul's inherent propensity for the intelligible"; it "more probably represents a series of choices and judgments effected by the soul that are of course correlated with its aforementioned propensity, but that are formulated at a lower level of discursive thought, where there is the possibility that preferences shaped during earlier embodiments might also intrude" (Kalligas 2014, 495 [III.4.5.4–12]). Since Plotinus associated *prohairesis* with the *hairesis biôn* all sorts of decisions and resolutions must be possible, not only the high contemplative activity, but also lower choice for a life. There can be bad resolutions for a whole life since the mythical *hairesis* can be at fault as well. See also 6, 8–10 and Commentary 6, 8–10.

5, 3 *disposition*: See for instance I.2 [19] 3, 19–24 (where Plotinus also ascribes a *diathesis* to the soul and writes that the divine itself does not have a *diathesis*). *Diathesis*

apparently depends on the soul's choice. There are better and worse *diatheseis* and *hexeis* (I.1 [53] 2, 6). Actions do not bring happiness, but the *diathesis* make the actions beautiful (I.5 [36] 10, 13). I.6 [1] 1, 4 (virtue, disposition, and beauty of the soul); Plotinus also uses this notion in 6, 9 and 6, 23, but in 6, 23 in a slightly different sense (see Commentary 6, 23).

5, 4 *refers, as in a riddle:* Plotinus uses this idea on several occasions in the *Enneads*, for instance in I.6 [1] 6, 3; 8, 11; 8, 19; III.5 [50] 2, 24; III.6 [26] 19, 26; IV.3 [27] 14, 5; IV.8 [6] 1, 21; V.1 [10] 7, 33; V.8 [31] 4, 26; VI.9 [9] 31. See on the usage in I.6 [1] Stock 2013 with further references. See also Kalligas 2014, 214 (I.6.8.18–20): "The verb *ainittomai*, meaning 'to hint at' or 'to express enigmatically,' is indicative of a need for allegorical interpretation"; Kalligas 2014, 495 (III.4.5.1–4); 531–532 (III.5.9.24–29).

Lines 4–6

Plotinus states that the body is not the source of evil, provided the resolution (*prohairesis*) of the soul determines the life and that that part rules which becomes dominant due to previous lives. In other treatises Plotinus calls the body the source of evil for the soul, and Plato's *Phaedo* had established for the philosophical tradition the evil inherent in the soul's association with the body (see Commentary 5, 6). From such passages scholars have

written of a general theory of evil in Plotinus. However, in addition to the present discussion, other treatises do not regard the body as evil (for instance IV.8 [6] or II.9 [33]). Plotinus opposes the Gnostics, who consider the sensible world to be evil, and asserts instead the beauty of the visible universe (especially in II.9 [33]). Thus, the descent of the soul is not a fall, but an unfolding of its powers (see especially IV.8 [6]; and Stock 2016a). Therefore, there is no need to regard this passage (5, 4–12) as an "objection" (Kalligas 2014, 495; III.4.5.4–12). Plotinus is developing further consequences of his interpretation of the "riddle" of the myth: since, according to the myth, the choice of the future life is made before the embodiment, responsibility lies with the soul alone, and the body can bear no blame. This is also consonant with Plotinus' general emphasis on the soul's responsibility for its own life.

5, 4 *resolution*: see Commentary 5, 3: *resolution*.

5, 4 *dominates*: translates *kuria*; see Commentary 5, 2: *power*.

5, 5–6 *from previous lives*: See Plato, *Republic* X 620a1–d2 (a similar idea, but not the same terminology). See IV.3 [27] 8, 9–10 where Plotinus connects the "previous lives" and the "choice" of the souls; III.3 [48] 4, 53.

5, 6 *then no longer is the body the principle of any evil for man*: In I.8 [51] *On evil*, Plotinus states that matter is the first evil and body the second, and the soul can become evil when it is involved with matter or body (I.8 [51], 3–4). But he also regards everything that comes from the One as good, and attributes to the soul the responsibility for evil. And he points out that the soul has to descend, or rather come forth, in order to activate its own powers (IV.8 [6] and Stock 2016a). On the topic of evil see also O'Brien 1971; O'Brien 1993; Rist 1961; Schäfer 2002.

Lines 7–9

Plotinus now articulates another consequence of his interpretation of the Platonic myth. The character (*êthos*) of the soul comes before the body, and the soul does not change its *daimôn*. Therefore, someone does not become wise or bad here in this embodied life, but before. Yet, we had said that Plotinus seems to show "reservations" regarding a choice in the afterlife. And how can this be reconciled with the previous statement that there is a permanent resolution? Plotinus probably wants to underline again that the body or the embodied life is not the origin for what happens to the soul. The soul's choice determines its course; the character comes "before" the body, but not in a temporal sense. Furthermore, Plotinus says that the new life is also the consequence of the previous lives (see

Commentary 5, 5–6). How to combine these two aspects, that is, the soul's permanent resolution and the fact that its current state is a consequence of previous lives? Since Plotinus does not follow Plato's myth which sets the choice of the new life in the disembodied state before the next incarnation, the only place and time where a soul can influence its own life and future life is this embodied life here. Therefore, there has to be the option to improve one's character here (or to let it get worse).

5, 7 *the soul's character*: The expression of the soul's character (*êthos*) can be found in Plato a couple of times, but never in the present sense (*Republic* III 400d6; *Lysis* 222a3; *Laws* I 650a5, II 666c1). For the idea that the soul comes before the body see *Timaeus* 34b10–c5; *Laws* X 892a2–b1; X 896b2–c7.

5, 7–8 *gets that [daimôn] which it chose*: From a grammatical point of view, the *tout'* could refer to either the character, the body, or the *daimôn*. There is nothing in Plato's myth that indicates a choice of the body, at least not independently of the life one chooses (see *Republic* X 618a7–8, where he mentions lives of men famous for beauty or strength; see also 618b4–6). Plato certainly speaks of the choice of the *daimôn* (*Republic* X 617e1–2; see above, especially Commentary 3, 8–9). The choice of the character is, one could say, the choice of the life, which is also

connected to the choice of the *daimôn*. Therefore, Guyot's translation as "character" makes good sense. Nonetheless, I think that the correct translation is "*daimôn*" since Plato only speaks of the choice of the *daimôn*.

5, 8–9 *does not change its* daimôn: Plato writes that the soul will receive the *daimôn* it chose as a guardian and overseer (*Republic* X 620d8–e1). There is no change of the *daimôn* once the new life has been chosen. Only after the end of this life can the soul choose a new *daimôn*.

5, 9 *the sage*: On the important notion of the sage (*spoudaios*) see Commentary 6, 1.

Lines 10–14

Plotinus asks two more questions. First of all, he wants to know whether someone could be potentially good or bad in the world beyond and then become actually good or bad in this world. Secondly, he asks what happens if a wise person gets a bad body or an evil person a good body. Plotinus seems to have nothing to say about the first question (Guyot 2003, 360n65). He would have to deny it, since he transfers the "choice" in the world beyond into the permanent "resolution" of the soul in this life; therefore there is no discarnate state in which the whole life is already there, potentially, to be afterward activated in the bodily life. But the second question is a real issue, since a

good character can have a sick body, while some villain may have a strong and healthy body. Plotinus' answer seems to suggest that the soul has some influence over its body, since he says that it can more or less supply for itself the adequate body. That seems, at first, a strange answer. His explanation draws on the fundamental idea of the good person's imperviousness to evil that he describes in I.4 [46]. He writes that what happens to someone by chance does not turn their resolution (*prohairesis*). External circumstances do not change the resolution of the soul. However, Plotinus later writes that the "resolution" of the soul is a consequence of the "disposition" and the circumstances (see Commentary 6, 8–10). This suggests that the circumstances play a certain part in building the "resolution" of the soul, but they cannot—according to the present passage— "turn" the "resolution." If external circumstances do not have that effect, the body cannot have such an influence either. It is, therefore, not relevant to the good soul whether its body is good or bad. This is Plotinus' general thought about the sage (see especially I.4 [46] and, with further readings, Commentary 6, 1). But what does it mean, then, that the soul can supply for itself the appropriate body? The soul will exercise its influence over the body and adapt it to its own resolution. If the wise person happens to be in a sick body, they will tend to it and improve it as much as necessary to their own philosophical purpose (cf. the example of Rogatianus who improved

his health by giving up politics and changing his diet; see Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, 7, 31–44). The bad state of the body may even present a challenge to the soul which can in the end help its self-perfection. Plotinus seems to trust the resolution of the good person more than Plato does who underlines the dangers talented souls are subjected to when they receive a bad education (*Republic* VI 491a6–492c9).

Lines 15–19

Plotinus now tries to supply proof for his theory from Plato. The text is corrupt in 5, 16, but the general meaning seems clear. He refers to the phases of the Platonic myth in the *Republic*.

5, 16 *then [sc., when it is said] to the souls that they are to choose their daimôn*: The text is clearly corrupt. Most manuscripts and editions have *tais tuchais*, but it is not clear how to connect these words to the rest of the sentence. Armstrong suggests that Plotinus follows *Republic* X 617e–620d and might therefore allude to the soul which chooses tyranny without realizing what is contained in this fate and translates: "thereafter what lies in the fortunes of the lives." There is, he thinks, "a distinction implicit in Plato's text between the 'examples of lives' and 'what lies in the fortunes of the lives" (Armstrong 1966–1988, III, 152–153n2); Guyot seems to go in a similar direction;

Faggin translates: "dei 'casi.'" Harder excises the phrase (Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, I, 544; so do Radice/Reale). A possible solution: Igal 1973, 83–85 (see also Igal 1985) proposes to read *tais psuchais hôs hairêsontai ton daimona*. Kalligas 2014, 496 (III.4.5.12–19; see also Kalligas 2010) changes this slightly into: *epeita tais psuchais <hôs daimona hairêsontai>*. The *Addenda* provide another variant: "*epeita tais tychais <daimona hôs hairêsometha> kai*"; see also the comment: "*tuchais <daimona hôs hairêsometha> coniecimus e Plat.* Rep. 617e1: *psuchais* (cum codice B) *<hos hairêsontai ton daimona>* Igal, Emerita 41, 1973, 85." Ferwerda chooses a similar translation ("en dat wij vervolgens 'door het lot onze daimon zullen kiezen'"). My translation follows Kalligas.

Lines 19–24

The next challenge comes in Plato's remarks about the *daimôn* in the *Timaeus* (90a2–d7). Plato's statements suggest that he is speaking about the highest form of the soul, that is, the rational soul or the *nous*. This seems irreconcilable with Plotinus' aforementioned theory, since the *nous* can only be the *daimôn* if the rational part is the active level. However, Plotinus here focuses on one central element, namely the question whether the *daimôn* is internal or external. He writes that the *daimôn* is "ours" if we understand "us" as souls, but "not

ours" if "we" are the living being. The *daimôn* as the inactive level above the level "we" live on is of course part of the soul; it is "ours" and not "we" as it is not the center of consciousness, but it still belongs to "us." Thus, if "we" is understood as the soul, the *daimôn* is "ours." If "we" is understood as the whole living being, however, Plotinus writes that the *daimôn* is beyond the "we" and therefore "not ours." This sounds contradictory at first sight, since the "living being" seems to be the larger notion. Yet, in Plotinus, very often the "we" as the living being consists of body and the lower soul and therefore excludes higher parts of the soul; the *daimôn* is beyond it. This theory, however, only makes sense in the cases of a *daimôn* who is at least on the level of the rational soul. Guyot's interpretation sounds convincing in itself, but it does not fit the text. He thinks that the *daimôn* is not "ours" if "we" are the active soul, but "ours" if "we" are the soul in all its faculties (Guyot 2003, 360n69). Rist draws attention to the fact that, according to the *Timaeus*, the *daimôn*, that is, the intellect, would of course be active, whereas Plotinus insists that the *daimôn* is inactive (Rist 1963b, 14).

Kalligas 2014, 496 (III.4.5.10–24) connects the function of the *daimôn* both to the Freudian superego and the Id. He suggests that the *daimôn* functions "as a kind of superego"; "it lies closer to our subconscious drives and on occasion represents them, yet it is permeated and ruled by higher aims and truths, not by desires or affections."

That the *daimôn* is beyond the conscious center of the soul is correct, but it is not the unconscious that lies below the conscious center, but only above. Therefore, the comparison with the Id is problematic. The difference between the Freudian superego and the *daimôn* is that the latter can be on a level that is controlled by a higher aim, but he can also be on a very low level if the active level is low as well. Furthermore, the *daimôn* does not act as a conscience, but remains inactive.

5, 20–22 *"ours" . . . "not ours"*: on the terminology of "we" and "ours" see Aubry 2004; Aubry 2008b; Chiaradonna 2008; Horn 2003; O'Daly 1973; Remes 2007; Smith 1978; Stock forthcoming 2021; Tornau 2009; Tornau 2010; Warren 1964.

5, 22–23 *according to the testimony of the* Timaeus: Plato, *Timaeus* 90a2–7: "And as regards the most lordly kind of our soul, we must conceive of it in this way: we declare that God has given to each of us, as his daemon, that kind of soul which is housed in the top of our body and which raises us—seeing that we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant—up from earth towards our kindred in the heaven" and 90c4–6: "and inasmuch as he is for ever tending his divine part and duly magnifying that daemon who dwells along with him, he must be supremely blessed." See also Introduction, pp. 34–37.

Lines 24–29

The last issue raised in Chapter 5 stems from the myth in Plato's *Republic*. Plato speaks of the *daimôn* one had chosen as the "fulfiller" (*apoplêrôtês*) of the choice of life. This seems to suggest that the *daimôn* is some kind of tutelary deity. Plotinus' interpretation wants to reconcile the function of the "fulfiller" with his own definition of the *daimôn*. The *daimôn* is said to "not allow [the soul] to descend much further to what is bad" or to reach a higher level or the same level as the *daimôn*. This means that a soul cannot just drop down a couple of steps to a lower level or jump up the ladder. But Plotinus then reiterates that the *daimôn* does not "act," only what "is beneath him," that is, the active part of the soul, acts. See Commentary 5, 28–29.

5, 25 *"fulfiller of what one chooses"*: See Plato, *Republic* X 620d8–e1: "she gave each the *daimôn* they had chosen (*hon eileto daimona*) to escort them as guardian (*phulaka*) through their lives and as fulfiller (*apoplêrôtên*) of their choices" (Emlyn-Jones/Preddy, slightly revised).

5, 28–29 *For one cannot become other than how one is*: The last sentence of Chapter 5 raises some issues, since it is not clear what the subject is: *ou gar dunatai allo genesthai ê hê(i) esti*. Many translators seem to assume

that this sentence speaks about man (Bréhier, Guyot: "On ne peut devenir autre chose que ce qu'on est déjà"; Igal, Faggin, Gerson, Müller); others, however, connect it to the *daimôn* (Armstrong, Ferwerda); Radice/Reale leave it open. MacKenna's translation diverges far from the text: "Man cannot cease to be characteristically man." Harder/Beutler/Theiler think the text is corrupt.

The preceding passage is about the *daimôn* (the "fulfiller of what one chose," 5, 25), which could suggest that the last passage also speaks about it, but Plotinus is often elliptical. It seems more likely to assume that the unexpressed subject of the verb refers to man who cannot change his life and his active part entirely. One could also say that the subject is the active part that is mentioned in parenthesis in the preceding sentence (5, 27). After having spoken about the *daimôn*, Plotinus comes back to man or the active element in him in this last resumptive sentence. He reflects on man's ability to change, that is, to deteriorate or to improve. Man does not change his *daimôn* (see Commentary 5, 8–9); therefore there cannot be a radical change (Igal 1985, 109n34). Igal's translation: "ya que no se puede cambiar sino en el nivel en que se está" seems to suggest, however, that there is some room for change within the current level of the soul. The range of change is clearly limited; there cannot be a radical change in character. Nonetheless, there can be a slow improvement or a slow deterioration (see also Plato's idea that the soul has

to live a philosophical life three times before it can regain its wings, *Phaedrus* 249a1–5). Otherwise Plotinus could not speak of someone who already is a *daimôn* or a god and will become one after death (see Commentary 3, 1).

Chapter 6

The last chapter of the treatise deals with further questions regarding the daimôn *and the fate of the soul in the afterlife. Plotinus often switches quickly from one topic to the next; some questions are barely treated, others are dealt with at length. Some ideas fit nicely into the aforementioned theory, others seem to be at odds. The reason for this discombobulated state of the chapter is probably that it reflects Plotinus' discussion with his students (see also Guyot 2003, 361n79). The discussion might go in surprising directions or turn quickly. Plotinus has not removed these traces of the original oral occasion. The main topics of the chapter are the case of the sage (6, 1–10), of the souls that will become wild beasts (6, 17–18), and of those which will go into the upper world (6, 18–33). Between the first and second topic Plotinus comes back to an issue from Chapter 3, that is, the "leading" of the* daimôn *(6, 10–17). The discussion of the souls that transcend the visible realm leads*

to a general discussion about soul (6, 33–45). The last part of the chapter deals with the question how a new life starts and what role the daimôn *plays in this process (6, 46–60).*

Lines 1–4

The first question Plotinus raises in Chapter 6 is that of the sage (*spoudaios*) and his *daimôn*. The beginning of Chapter 3 had spoken about the sage who *becomes* a *daimôn* since he already is a *daimôn* in this present life. Plotinus distinguishes again between the two senses of the word *daimôn* (see Commentary 3, 3–8). The first meaning is that of an ontological level, designating a being that is superior to human beings. In the second sense, the *daimôn* is the level above the active level. Since intellect is active in the sage, his *daimôn* must be "above Intellect." See Commentary 6, 3–4.

6, 1 *sage*: Plotinus uses the concept of the *spoudaios* when he speaks of the good or wise person. He mostly discusses the *spoudaios* in I.4 [46] where he speaks about the sage's imperviousness to all external evils. See also for instance III.1 [3] 10, 10–15. On this topic see especially Schniewind 2003 (she mentions the passage in III.4 on pp. 172–173) and Dillon 1996.

6, 1 *It is . . . He*: Both the sentence that says that he "is active through the better part" and the sentence that says

he "would not have been properly a sage if he needed to have the *daimôn* as his helper" are introduced by *ê*. It is clearly not an "either/or" construction here, which would not make any sense. It is the *ê* Plotinus often uses when he introduces his answer.

6, 2 *as his helper*: The sage would not be a sage if the *daimôn* helped him to be wise; the wise has to be wise through himself. "Consequently, a wise man will be someone who acts in concordance with the virtues recommended by the higher, intellective part of his soul (cf. I 2.7.6–13), as long as it is he himself who is making the relevant choices" (Kalligas 2014, 496 [III.4.6.1–4]).

6, 3–4 *Therefore he is himself a* daimôn *or in accord with a* daimôn*, and his* daimôn *is a god*: The term *daimôn* is again used in two senses, that is, the *daimôn* someone *is*, and the *daimôn* someone *has*. The sage *is* a *daimôn* in the first sense (or in accordance with one), and his *daimôn* in the second sense is a god. As there is no indefinite article in Greek, the latter part of this sentence could also be translated as "and his *daimôn* is God" (Armstrong, Harder and Igal).

What does *theos* mean in this passage? In the *Enneads*, the term *theos* often refers to Intellect or the One. Therefore, Kalligas assumes that the sage's *daimôn* is either Intellect or the One (Kalligas 2014, 497 [III.4.6.1–4]).

Igal and Guyot assume that it is the One; they provide the following argument: The *daimôn* is the inactive level above the active level. The active element in the sage is intellect. The level above the intellect is the One. Therefore, the *daimôn* of the sage is the One (Igal 1985, 111n40; Guyot 2003, 335).

According to Plotinus' usual assumptions about the intelligible realm and its three levels of the One, Intellect, and Soul, the inactive level above the Intellect cannot be anything but the One. However, there are two passages that open up other possibilities. First of all, Plotinus assumes that someone can become a *daimôn* or a god (3, 1–2); this god is ranked higher than a *daimôn*, but it cannot mean that someone becomes the One. If being a *daimôn* is linked with the intellect being active in him (6, 1–4), the god someone can become must be above Intellect, yet below the One. This suggests that there are some levels of higher existence that are different from the Intellect or the One. Secondly, a little later in Chapter 6, Plotinus distinguishes the two groups of souls that go to the higher realm. Here, too, a variety of higher lives emerges (see Commentary 6, 18–19; 6, 19–30; 6, 30–33). All of these souls lived a life beyond the normal human realm, but there are different levels; some souls belong to the highest possible form of life and leave the visible realm. Other souls lived pure lives and find themselves somewhere in the higher visible realm. In this passage, Plotinus does

not mention the sage, who, however, belongs to the souls who lived a higher life. How are we to combine these two pictures? In my view, the slight confusion or tension is a result of the combination of Plotinus' own theory of the *daimôn* as the inactive level above the active level and more traditional views about the guardian *daimôn*. According to these more traditional views, there is a hierarchy of beings composed of gods, *daimones*, human beings, animals, and plants; the guardian *daimôn* belongs to the class of *daimones*, higher human beings have a god instead of a *daimôn*, and the realm of the *daimones* is the realm under the moon. Another traditional view, from Plato, is the idea that some higher souls go to the higher visible realm, whereas others leave the visible realm altogether. Plotinus seems to follow these more traditional ideas when he speaks about these two groups in Chapter 6 (Commentary 6, 18–19; 6, 19–30; 6, 30–33), when he says that the highest souls leave the *daimonic* realm (see below Commentary 6, 31) or when he writes that someone could become a *daimôn* or a god (Commentary 3, 1–2). The tension cannot be resolved completely, but the result of the combination is, in the end, a more varied picture of human lives. The theory presented in Chapter 3, in accord with the beginning of Chapter 6, suggests that there are merely the following lives with their respective *daimones*: sensitive level with rational thought as *daimôn*, rational thought with the intellect as the *daimôn* (Commentary

3, 5–8); the sage who lives on the level of intellect and has a *daimôn* which is above the intellect (*hyper noun*) (Commentary 6, 1–4). The story about the souls that go into the higher realm and those who become animals adds a variety of higher and lower lives, a variety of characters and forms of life (Commentary 6, 17–18; 18–19; 6, 19–30; 6, 30–33). Thus, to come back to the initial question about the sage's *daimôn* we can conclude that there are different levels and stages of becoming or being a sage. After all, the soul has to lead a philosophical life three times in a row in order to leave the circle of becoming (Plato, *Phaedrus* 249a1–5). So, we might say, that a sage also has to advance, from life to life, and that he does not have the same *daimôn* on the different levels of the itinerary. Some sages might have some intermediary *daimôn* on the level of the higher world-soul, whereas the highest level of those leaving the visible realm might actually be those whose *daimôn* is the One.

In a very literal sense the thesis of a god as the sage's *daimôn* corresponds to Porphyry's story (*Life of Plotinus* 10, 24; see Introduction, pp. 94–96), yet Plotinus' position is incompatible with the theurgic conjuration of spirits; the sage's *daimôn* (whether it is the One or some other higher entity) cannot be made to appear through a ritual; it is not an extrapersonal entity, but part of the soul. See also Kalligas 2014, 497 (III.4.6.1–4) who refers to Plato, *Alcibiades* I 124c5–10, where Socrates speaks about his

guardian (*epitropos*) who is a "god (*theos*)" "who until this day would not let me converse with you; and trusting in him I say that through no other man but me will you attain to eminence." The word used in this passage is *epitropos* and not *daimôn*, and it is clear that the god who is mentioned here is the god who sends Socrates the warning sign, presumably Apollo (on the *daimonion* see Introduction, pp. 37–42). It is not the *daimôn* in the sense of the myths of the *Republic* or the *Phaedo*. Plotinus never uses the word *epitropos*, but he could have, of course, found the idea of a god guiding the sage inspiring for his theory of a god as the sage's *daimôn*. On becoming a *daimôn* or a god see also Commentary 3, 1–2.

6, 4 *So it [the* daimôn*] is actually beyond the intellect?*: Plotinus does not explicitly answer the question, but he clearly affirms it. The sage's *daimôn* is beyond the intellect since the sage lives on the level of the intellect already. See also Commentary 6, 3–4.

Lines 4–7

Plotinus now raises the question why a sage, who has a god as a *daimôn*, is not wise from the beginning. The reason he gives is the "disturbance of coming to birth" mentioned in *Timaeus* 43b5–7. Reason has to gain control step by step. The disturbance of coming to birth affects everyone, and not even a sage is excluded from it. Even

the wisest soul will need to work its way up to reason and intellect, purify itself from the body and the emotions. The difference between the sage and other human beings is where this movement ends. Many human beings remain on the level of sense-perception or emotion, others ascend to rational thought, and some reach the level of the intellect. However, there is an "inner movement" that is there "before reason" and already turns to what is "its own," that is, toward what it is supposed to become according to the choices in the previous life.

6, 4 *if*: In HS_1 and HS_2: *ei*. Similarly: Armstrong, Radice/Reale, Kalligas, Ferwerda, Gerson, Igal. However, Harder/Beutler/Theiler argue for *ê*. They think that a new thought starts with *dia ti* which requires a full stop before, and therefore a complete sentence, that is, not an *ei*, in line 4 (Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, 544–545); Bréhier chooses *ê*, and Guyot also translates *ê*. If one chose this modification the translation would be: "Well, what is beyond the intellect is his *daimôn*. Why not since the beginning?" (Faggin has *ei* in the Greek text but does not translate it.) I do not see a reason to change the critical text, since the meaning does not change (the question "why not since the beginning?" refers to the sage in either case, in my view; only Harder/Beutler/Theiler assume that it refers to all human beings).

6, 6 *the disturbance of coming to birth*: Plato speaks about the disturbance of coming to birth and the subsequent process from infant to grown-up human being in *Timaeus* 43a6–c7; the connection with the body upsets the revolution of the soul and disturbs it. It then has to set itself in order again step by step (see *Timaeus* 90b6–c6). Plotinus uses "disturbance" (*thorybos*) five times in the *Enneads*. Once he speaks about the disturbance in "us" (I.1 [53] 9, 25); twice this disturbance in the soul is compared to the disturbance in a public meeting (*ekklêsia*) (IV.4 [28] 17, 23 and 26; VI.4 [22] 15, 26). On this image see Stock 2019.

6, 6–7 *The inner movement is, nonetheless, already in existence before reason and it reaches out for what is its own*: Plotinus assumes that there is an internal movement in the soul which aims for what this soul is supposed to become according to its previous life. Guyot 2003, 361n75 refers to a Stoic background of becoming a sage and of becoming the being one is supposed to be.

Lines 8–10

Plotinus then asks whether this internal movement of the soul always succeeds. He does not ask about the success of the "*daimôn*" as the critical edition and many translators assume (see Commentary 6, 8). He responds in the negative saying that the soul has the disposition to have

a certain life and a certain resolution under certain circumstances. MacKenna's translation diverges far from the text, but he has, in my view, rightly translated the main point: "the Soul is so constituted that its life-history and its general tendency will answer not merely to its own nature but also to the conditions among which it acts." In Chapter 5, line 3, Plotinus had used the terms disposition and resolution as (almost) synonymous; here, he seems to distinguish between them. The soul has a disposition to have a certain resolution in certain circumstances. This means that it will, as MacKenna thinks, react to circumstances and not only to its own disposition. A certain soul would therefore become a sage if the circumstances are right, but fail to do so in a different situation.

6, 8 *succeed*: The critical edition (HS_1; HS_2) and many translators (Harder, Bréhier, Armstrong, Gerson, Guyot, Ferwerda) assume that the subject of this sentence is the *daimôn*. But the question why the *daimôn* succeeds does not make sense. Here the *daimôn* is described as "inactive." Plotinus only asks about its "activities" when he tries to reconcile Plato's statements with his own theory (see Commentary 3, 10–20; 5, 24–29; 6, 10–17). Other translations leave it open (for instance Radice/Reale, Igal, Kalligas). MacKenna thinks it refers to the sage, and the usage of the word "succeed" (*katorthoi*) might refer to

the Stoic sage (see Guyot 2003, 361n76; Flamand 2003, 461n127).

In my view, Faggin rightly assumes that the subject is *kinesis*, that is, "movement," from the preceding sentence (and despite the fact that his translation says otherwise, this is what Guyot 2003, 361n76 says: "La question est de savoir si ce mouvement naturel vers le bien suffit par lui-même pour devenir un homme bon"). Plotinus inquires whether the internal movement of the soul to reach its own (6, 6–7), that is, its appropriate level, will necessarily succeed.

6, 9 *disposition*: On this notion (*diathesis*), see Commentary 5, 3 and 6, 23.

6, 10 *resolution*: see Commentary 5, 3.

Lines 10–17

In this passage Plotinus comes back to the question from Plato's *Phaedo* (107d5–8) of the *daimôn* leading the soul after death. Plotinus first writes that the *daimôn* does not remain the same unless the soul chooses the same life again; since the soul chooses its active level, it also chooses the *daimôn*, and this *daimôn* will only remain the same if the soul chooses the same life again. Then he inquires how it was "before [the choice]," and responds—a little mysteriously—that "it goes into the same form after

death which it had before birth" and that "it is present, as if from a new beginning, in the time until the next birth of the souls which are being punished—though that is not a life for them, but judgment."

Since Plotinus rationalized the idea of a choice of a new life in the world beyond into a permanent will of the soul in Chapter 5 (see Commentary 5, 1–4), he seems to have abandoned the idea of the afterlife and of the punishments and rewards the Platonic myths speak about. Therefore, the question of the status and the function of the *daimôn* who leads the soul to judgment and to Hades is problematic. In fact, the same Platonic passage had caused trouble before (see Commentary 3, 10–20) since it does not seem to agree with the idea of the *daimôn* as the inactive level; in Chapter 3 too, the idea of a change of the *daimôn* and of the afterlife remained problematic. Yet, Plotinus has the firm intention of integrating all the Platonic passages into his theory; therefore, he has to deal with the *daimôn* who "leads" the soul to Hades. It is not clear what Plotinus means when he speaks about the *daimôn* assuming the same form after death which it had before birth. Up to this point in the treatise, Plotinus had never spoken about this form, and it is not clear how the *daimôn* in the Plotinian sense could change its form. A solution is to surmise that it is the soul, or rather part of the soul, in its discarnate state. In Chapter 5, Plotinus seemed to have given up the idea of a discarnate state of

the soul between incarnations altogether. Here, however, he speaks about punishment before the next birth, which is in tune with Plato's myths. This probably means that he does not give up the idea of a discarnate state and a punishment of the soul, but that he rationalizes the idea of a mythical choice of the soul into a permanent will (Chapter 5, 1–4).

6, 11 *has led [the soul] to Hades*: see *Phaedo* 107d5–8. See Commentary 3, 3–4.

6, 11–12 *not to remain the same*: see *Phaedo* 107d5–e4 where Plato says that "another guide" brings them back. See also *Republic* X 617e1–2 where the soul chose the *daimôn* (see Commentary 3, 8–10). See also Plutarch, *On the Daimonion* 585F–586A. See Kalligas 2014, 497–498 (III.4.6.10–17) on different interpretations of the passage in Plato's *Phaedo* in other Neoplatonic authors.

6, 17 *that is not a life for them, but judgment*: Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, Ib, 545 assume that this is an objection raised by a reader to the general idea presented here, but not followed up in the text. However, I cannot quite see in what sense it would be an objection.

Lines 17–18

Plotinus now asks about the case of those who become wild beasts (mentioned in Chapter 2, 17–18) and wants to know whether they have something inferior to a *daimôn*. His response is that they have "a base or simpleminded" *daimôn*. In Plato, *daimones* seem to always be good, but in popular belief and in other philosophical authors *daimones* can be good or bad (see Introduction, pp. 21, 43–45, 49, 52, 83). Some authors assume the existence of two personal *daimones* (see Boyancé 1935). Plotinus' thought diverges from this, and the idea of a "simpleminded" *daimôn* seems to be unique. It makes, however, perfect sense in his definition of the *daimôn*. If someone's active level is very low, the level of the *daimôn* too will be low, and possibly simpleminded, even if it is still higher than the active level. Adamson assumes that the *daimôn* is lower than the soul and drags it down; "it is simply the mirror image of the good *daimôn*, that is, a faculty *worse* than the one that was dominant and active in the previous life" (Adamson 2017, 267). This interpretation is attractive, since, if the *daimôn* were the level above the active level of the person who will become a wild animal, it should be the rational soul (according to Chapter 3, 5–6), since this person lives on the level of sense-perception; their *daimôn* could not be described as a "simpleminded *daimôn*" if it is the rational soul. The problem with this interpretation is, however, that Plotinus

never describes a *daimôn* as something lower than the active center. Therefore, I assume that the definition of the *daimôn* as the inactive level above the active level is valid for the case of the person becoming a wild animal as well. However, their *daimôn* is not the rational soul, but something lower. In his definition and the examples, Plotinus mentions only two cases (sense-perception as active and rational soul as active; see 3, 5–8). However, Chapters 2 and 6 show that there is a great variety of cases both on the lower and on the upper level, that is, souls becoming different kinds of animals or even plants (see Commentary 2, 16–30), souls leaving the upper realm altogether or going to different stars (see Commentary 6, 18–33). There has to be a matching variety of *daimones*, and, as a consequence, the *daimôn* of someone who will become a beast is not the rational soul, but something below that. Maybe, the *daimôn* of a person who will become a bee is rational thought, but the human beings who will become wild animals live a lower level than the former, and, therefore, their *daimones* are lower as well. On the reincarnation into animals see also Commentary 2, 16–30 and 3, 16–17 and Introduction, pp. 66–70.

Lines 18–19

The next longer passage (6, 18–33) deals with the souls that go up, that is, the souls who are neither reincarnated

in lower animals (see lines 17–18) nor in the human form, but who have lived a pure life and rise up beyond the human life. There are two options. They can either be in the upper world, but still in the visible realm, or they can transcend the visible world altogether. Plotinus first deals with the first group (6, 19–30) and then, briefly, with the second (6, 30–33). Plato makes a similar distinction in the *Phaedo* (114b6–c6); see also *Laws* X 904c6–e3.

6, 18–19 *[enter]*: the Greek text has no verb; I assume it is *eisiousais* from line 17.

Lines 19–30

The souls that go to the upper visible world are said to end up on the sun, a planet, or the sphere of fixed stars, depending on their rational activity here. According to Plato's *Phaedo,* this group of souls lives "upon the earth," in a physical world that is higher, purer, and better than the world we live in (114b6–c6); he does not assume that planets or stars would be their abode. In Plato's *Timaeus*, we find the idea that the souls are connected to a star and can return to it once they have overcome the disturbances of the embodied life (42b3–5). The general idea of a connection of the souls to stars is known in Greek thought by the late fifth century (see Avagianou 2002, 82–86). There is, as Kalligas 2014, 498–499 (III.4.6.18–30) points out, a Pythagorean background to the idea of the "affinity of

souls with celestial bodies" (see also Scott 1991, 3–4); the idea can also be found in Numenius (see *Fragments* 34 and 35). Further references and readings can be found in Kalligas 2014, 498–499 (III.4.6.18–30). On ancient speculations about the stars, see Scott 1991, 87–88 (especially Chapters 1 and 4); Boyancé 1987, 130–133; Cumont 1922, 91–109; Delatte 1915, 274–276; Rougier 1933, passim, especially 80–82; Scott 1991, 87–88: "Macrobius twice (1. 11. 11 f. and 1.12) speaks of the soul's descent through planetary spheres."

Whereas in Plato's *Timaeus* the souls are said to go back to their star if they live a pure life (42b3–5), Plotinus says that their destination depends on their level of rational activity. They do not, as in Plato, go to the star they belonged to originally, but to the star or planet that is in concordance with their own soul or, to be precise, with its dominant part.

Plotinus assumes a correspondence between the individual soul and the world-soul (on this topic in general see also Helleman-Elgersma 1980). Plotinus writes that there is a *kosmos noêtos* in human souls and "disposition of the same kind as the world-soul." Since Plotinus emphasizes the difference between the *kosmos noêtos* and the other parts, one might think that he wants to refer to lower parts of the soul, but this is not the case. He is not referring to the world-soul that animates the sensible cosmos (here on earth), but the world-soul that permeates the heavens, the

firmament, the planets, and the stars. Different powers come from different parts of this soul to human beings. And the soul will go to the star or planet from which the activity came to it. The matching god would be this soul's *daimôn*, either the star itself or the power overseeing it. Thus, soul chooses the influence of the stars by choosing a certain life (see Adamson 2008, 286); Kalligas 2014, 499 (III.4.6.18–30): "the soul, in choosing its mode of life, places itself in the charge of a certain type of Guardian Spirit, who is in turn connected with a particular stellar region—and this consequently rules, to some degree, the fate of the particular soul, without, however, actually imposing this fate upon it."

Since Plotinus speaks about souls that transcend the human realm, he must speak about souls that are philosophical to a good degree. They are not yet so perfect that they leave the sensible world altogether (see below 6, 30–33), but they are on the way. It is not clear what happens to these souls in Plotinus' universe after they have reached the star, whether they continue to live on this star, or live again on earth, or are finally freed from the sensible realm altogether. Plotinus rightly says that this has to be investigated further (6, 30). The god who will become the *daimôn* of this soul is not the One, since there is a plurality of these gods, nor is it the Intellect (see Commentary 6, 3–4). The plurality of gods and the idea of an alignment of a certain soul and a star/god probably

goes back to Plato's *Phaedrus,* where the souls' chariots follow a god and his *daimones*, and where every soul is said to belong to the lot of a certain god (246e4–247a4; 250b7–8). This shows that there is a variety of different higher lives (Plotinus alludes to this passage, for instance, in I.2 [19] 6, 2–7 [see Commentary 3, 1–2]; V.8 [31] 10; II.3 [52] 13, 30).

6, 19–20 *[enter]*: the Greek text has no verb; I assume, once again, that it is derived from *eisiousais* in line 17. See Commentary 6, 18–19.

6, 22–23 *a cosmos in our soul, not only an intelligible one, but a disposition of the same kind as the world-soul*: See Commentary 3, 22 and 6, 19–30 and Introduction, pp. 70–72.

6, 23 *disposition*: on this notion see Commentary 5, 3 and 6, 9. "The *diathesis* of soul is said to be similar in form to the *diathesis* of the Soul of the universe, and is thereby the psychic equivalent to the intelligible cosmos within us all, the 'arrangement' of powers and actions which brings soul into harmony with itself and all other beings" (Phillips 1995, 140). According to Plato's *Timaeus* the human souls are mixed in the same bowl as the world-soul, just not in the same purity (41d4–7).

6, 29 *have as its god or* daimôn: The expression of *daimôni chrêsetai* seems to be Pythagorean, as Detienne 1963,

22–23 points out (see for instance Plutarch, *On the daimonion*, 586A and [Pyth.] *Carmen aureum* 61–62 [see Thom 1995, 98–99 {text}; 200–204 {comment}]; see also Detienne 1959b, 22–23). I am following the emendation of the *Addenda* to lines 28–29. See also Kalligas 2014, 499 (III.4.6.18–30).

6, 29 *the corresponding star*: In III.5 [50] 6, 26–30 Plotinus describes the stars as divine. In V.1 [10] 4, 1–5 Plotinus speaks of visible and invisible gods. See also Caluori 2015, 120–125 on the souls of the stars (unfortunately, the passage in III.4 is not mentioned). Timotin 2012, 300 draws attention to the fact that the connection of a *daimôn* to a specific star can be found in the Hermetic texts and in Jewish Apocrypha. See also Plato, *Timaeus* 40b4–8 on the idea of the divinity of the stars, and Commentary 6, 19–30.

Lines 30–33

Plotinus now comes briefly to the souls that leave the visible realm. He writes that they transcend "the daimonic nature and every fate bound up with becoming" and the "visible world" altogether. Plato mentions the option of leaving the cycle of reincarnations as well. In the *Phaedrus* he speaks of the souls that have lived a philosophical life three times in a row (249a1–5). In the *Phaedo*, we can find the idea that the purest souls leave the cycle of reincarnations forever (see *Phaedo* 114c1–5 and Commentary 6,

18–19). The myth in the *Republic* does not mention such an idea. Plotinus says very little about these souls; but if one follows Plato, they must be the philosophical souls (see Commentary 6, 3–4). Kalligas 2014, 499 (III.4.6.30–37) (see also Sorabji 1983, 188) points out that Plotinus seems to support this idea here, but that his idea of an "eternal recurrence" seems to require that every soul has to be "embodied at least once in every cosmic period."

6, 31 *beyond the daimonic nature*: In this passage, Plotinus uses the term "daimonic" referring to the higher, yet still visible region. Traditionally, *daimones* are often linked with the realm under the moon or connected to the moon (see Introduction, p. 46; Commentary 6, 3–4). See also III.5 [50] 6, 19–24: "it is better not to call any being in the intelligible world a spirit (*daimôn*), [. . .] and, on the other side, to say that the gods in the universe of sense down to the moon, the visible ones, are secondary gods which come after and correspond to the higher intelligible gods and depend upon them, like the radiance around every star."

Lines 33–45

The transition from the discussion of the souls that leave the visible realm (lines 30–33) merges seamlessly—though surprisingly quickly—into a general discussion about soul's power. Soul is not divided in itself, but divisible among bodies, especially the vegetative soul. It gives life

to living beings, and multiplies them, even when it departs at the death of a plant or an animal (on this topic and the idea of "spontaneous generation" see Kalligas 2014, 500 [III.4.6.37–45]; Kalligas 2000, 28–29).

6, 34–35 *divisible among bodies*: Plotinus quotes Plato's *Timaeus* 35a2–3. He uses this passage (or similar versions) a little later (6, 39–40) and several times in the *Enneads* (see for instance IV.2 [4] 1, 33–34; 1, 46; 2, 51; IV.9 [8] 2, 27; IV.1 [21] 1, 10–11; 1, 14–15; VI.4 [22] 4, 27; 4, 31–32; IV.3 [27] 4, 13; 19, 7–8; 19, 15; 19, 30–31; I.1 [53] 8, 11–13). Soul is one and undivided in itself, but it is divisible among bodies, since bodies themselves are divided.

6, 39–40 *divisible among bodies*: see Commentary 6, 34–35. Here, Plotinus speaks about the vegetative soul, the soul in plants.

Lines 46–50

The last paragraph of the treatise (lines 46–60) deals with the story of the return of the soul to the visible realm and its fate in the new life. In the first section (lines 46–50) Plotinus underlines again that the soul has a *daimôn* according to its choice of the next life; it can be the same or a different one according to the soul's choice of life. He then refers to Plato's spindle of necessity from the myth of Er, but uses a different kind of imagery, namely, the boat.

Accompanied by its *daimôn*, the soul is set upon the All as upon a boat. Then, it is set "in a seat of fortune as on a ship," that is, in its individual vessel.

6, 44 *from the All-Soul*: Following HS_1 where we find *tên ek tou pantos* (as opposed to HS_2 who strike *tên*), that is, an expression which clearly denotes the world-soul (see Guyot 2003, 362n91).

6, 46 *comes back here*: The return of the soul to the sensible realm after the choice of the new life, according to Plato's *Republic* (X 621b2–4).

6, 46–47 *the same or another* daimôn: The souls choose their new life and their *daimôn*; it is the same *daimôn* only if they choose the same life or level of life; otherwise it is a new *daimôn*.

6, 47–49 *the soul first embarks on this universe as on a boat*: Kalligas 2014, 500 (III.4.6.46–49): "In the first stage of descent, the souls come aboard the cosmic 'craft' of heaven radiant with light, which Plato in the myth of the *Republic* had already compared to the 'cables girding a trireme' (X 616c3)." See also Commentary 6, 50.

6, 49–50 *the so-called nature of the spindle receives it*: Plato speaks of the "spindle of Necessity" (*Republic* X 616c4) in the myth of Er. In Plato, the spindle and its

movement are described in great detail (X 616b2–617d1) before Er comes to Lachesis and the choice of lives. Plotinus also refers to the spindle in II.3 [52] 9, 1–6 and 15, 1–5. On the image of the spindle see Kalligas 2014, 294 (II.3.9.1–6).

6, 50 *sets it in the seat of its fortune in life, as on a ship*: In line 48, Plotinus used the term *skaphos* for the boat of the All. Now he uses a different term for the individual boat: *naus*. Kalligas thinks that Plotinus is building this image on that of "the 'vessel' (*ochêma*) referred to in the *Timaeus* (41e1–2; cf. *Phdr.* 247b1–3)" and that this "image is of course associated with that of the soul as *kubernêtês* of the body" (Kalligas 2014, 500–501 [III.4.6.49–50]). Guyot links the usage of the image of the boat to the boats carrying the soul to the underworld (*Phaedo* 113d5) and to passages in the *Politicus* (272e4) and the *Critias* (109c2–3) where the universe is compared to a boat and the god to a pilot; furthermore, he mentions Aristotle's analogy soul-body/pilot-boat (*On the Soul* II, 413a8–9) (Guyot 2003, 362–363n92). The image of the universe as a boat steered by the demiurge can be found in Numenius (*Fragments* 18). On the image of the soul as *kubernêtês*, its sources and tradition, see Kalligas 2014, 112–113 (I.1.3.20–21). Kalligas even wonders whether there is a loose connection to "the ancient Egyptian belief in the 'skiff of the soul'" (Kalligas 2014, 500–501 [III.4.6.49–50]). On the ship of the soul see Griffiths 1975, 245 and Bonner 1941.

However, the examples Bonner presents come from funerary monuments; the boat of the soul is not "used" during life as here in Plotinus, but in the afterlife or on the way to the afterlife. The image may well have been inspired by the Platonic sources Kalligas and Guyot point out, but it is noteworthy that Plotinus does not present the soul as the *kubernêtês* of the boat in the present passage. On the contrary, the following lines show quite clearly that the soul is merely a passenger in this boat; I would rather not interpret the ship as the body, guided by the soul; it rather signifies the fortune of life the soul goes through (see Commentary 6, 51–60).

Lines 51–60

The last passage of the treatise describes the new life of the soul by using the image of the ship introduced in the passage above. The passenger will see many spectacles through the ship's and his own movements, like a passenger on a ship who is moved by the ship and by his own movement on the ship. The ship's movements do not determine completely what happens to the passenger, whose own impulses have an influence as well. Therefore, Plotinus concludes that different things can happen to different people under the same or different circumstances and the same things to other people even if the circumstances are not the same. His resuming sentence says that this is "destiny." Plotinus thereby underlines

that what happens to someone depends on character and not just circumstances. The same circumstances can have a different effect on different people.

6, 52 *walks about:* The critical texts says *pheromenon*; Harder corrects it into *poreuomenon*; Ficino translates *deambulantem*. Harder and Beutler and Theiler 1956–1971, Ib, 545: "*ê kai pheromenon* kann nur heißen 'oder auch bewegt wird,' nämlich auf dem Schiff vermöge der Fahrtbewegung. Gemeint ist hier aber zweifellos die Eigenbewegung des auf dem Schiff Befindlichen, gleich erläutert durch *55 horme(i) eoikeia(i)*. Diese beiden Möglichkeiten, Bewegung des Schiffes oder Eigenbewegung, sind natürlich für die Schicksalslehre, die hier im Bilde dargestellt wird, entscheidend. Also ist *pheromenon* korrupt." Therefore, I am following Harder. However, Fernández Llorens 1969, 368 argues that the middle form of *pherô* could have the meaning of "to move oneself."

6, 53 *changes*: Plotinus uses the term (*metatheseis*) in two other treatises (IV.4 [28] 45, 25 and III.2 [47] 15, 46), but not quite in the same sense; the closest to our passage is III.2, where the wise person is encouraged to see all the atrocities of life just as scenes at the theater. This term and the following (see line 53 and Commentary 6, 53) come from the vocabulary of theater (Guyot 2003, 363n95).

6, 53 *chance events (*sumptômata*)*: See VI.8 [39] 10, 9–11: "but chance is in what does not come to be as a result of what goes before and consistently, but is mere coincidence." See Commentary 6, 53: *changes*.

6, 55 *impulse*: The meaning of the term *hormê* is neutral in this passage; Plotinus wants to point out that there is a movement that comes to us from the outside and one that comes from ourselves, that is, from our own impulse (see Commentary 6, 52: *walks about*). On the Stoic background of the term see Brisson and Laurent 2002, 161–162n7.

6, 56–59 *For not everyone is moved or wants or acts similarly in the same circumstances. So different things happen to different [persons] arising out of the same or different occurrences, and the same things happen to different people even when the circumstances are different.* Since our life consists of the combination of the movement of the ship, that is, of the external circumstances, and of our own impulse, as Plotinus has just established, neither the same circumstances nor the same character of two people will result in the same actions. Luck or mischance will bring good to certain (virtuous) characters, while they could be detrimental to weaker souls. One soul could derive strength out of bad circumstances, another out of an instance of luck. It is obvious that the determining factor is the soul's character and not the circumstances.

Sometimes, Plotinus seems to acknowledge limitations to the soul's freedom and responsibility (see Kalligas 2014, 474–475 [III.3.3.3–18]), but here he underlines the soul's freedom and responsibility, no matter the circumstance. See also II.3 [52] 15, 13–17: "Of men some are born belonging to the power that comes from the whole and to external circumstances, as if under an enchantment, and are in few things or nothing themselves. Others master these powers and circumstances and rise above them, so to speak, by their head, toward the upper world and beyond soul, and so preserve the best and ancient part of the soul's substance."

6, 60 *destiny* (*heimarmenê*): In his early treatise III.1 [3], Plotinus criticizes notions of destiny which limit human freedom (see, on this treatise and the notion of destiny, Brisson and Laurent 2002, 143–147). The later treatise III.2–3 [47–48] *On Providence* continues this discussion. In III.4 [15], the term destiny is certainly not used in a negative restricting sense, but in the sense of destiny referring back to providence and to the good order of the world (see Guyot 2003, 363n99).

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